

WILD WEST WEEKLY.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE REDSKIN TRAITOR

OR THE SIEGE IN THE SAND HILLS AND OTHER STORIES

By An Old Scout



The redskin knew his treachery had been discovered, so he turned to flee. But he was hardly quick enough. Young Wild West leaped after him like a shot and caught him by the hair "No, you don't!"

WILD WEST WEEKLY

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Young Wild West and the Redskin Traitor

OR, THE SIEGE IN THE SAND HILLS

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.—The Indian on the Desert.

The sun was so hot that it seemed to be blistering. The undulating desert of southeastern Arizona stretched out as far as the eye could reach, broken here and there by mounds of sand that had been heaped up by the freaks of a high wind. A patch of prickly cacti showed up on the right—the only green thing to be seen anywhere. Riding straight for this patch of the prickly product of the desert a party of eight might have been seen. The time was in the early fall, a few years ago, when that part of the country was in a far less civilized state than at the present time; when bad Indians were plentiful and outlawed white men were frequently met with. But it was little that the members of the party referred to cared about, either. They rather courted danger from such sources than avoided it. When we state that they were no other than Young Wild West, the well-known boy hero and Champion Deadshot of the West, and the friends who traveled with him in search of excitement and adventure, the reader will perhaps understand this.

The dashing young deadshot had struck over the mountains from Mexico into Arizona for no other purpose than to look up something that might prove real exciting, and, at the same time, give him a chance to do a good turn for someone who was deserving of it. When the party came to the desert they decided to cross it, for the hot sands had no terror for them. They simply stocked up with a good supply of water and set out. It was high noon when they headed for the cactus, for they knew the high plants would afford them some shade while they rested for an hour or two and ate the noonday meal. As was usually the custom, Young Wild West was riding at the head of the line with his golden-haired sweetheart, Arietta Murdock, at his side. Following them came Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, and his wife Anna, with Jim Dart, a Wyoming boy about the same age as our hero, and his sweetheart, Eloise Gardner, not far behind. Somewhat in the rear of the little procession came Hop Wah and Wing Wah, the two Chinamen who were employed as servants by the party. They were leading a pair of well-loaded pack-horses, and, like rest, they seemed to feel the fierce rays of the sun greatly.

"Hully uppee, Misler Wild," Hop Wah called out, when he noticed the young deadshot was urging his sorrel stallion Spitfire to a faster pace. "Me wantee gittee outtee um sun, so be."

"Come on, then, heathen," Cheyenne Charlie shouted. "I reckon them nags kin kick up a faster gait, anyhow."

Thus encouraged, the Chinaman pulled up and gained upon those ahead, while his brother Wing tried to do the same. Hop did not seem to care anything about his brother, however. The fact was he regarded himself as being somewhat superior to him, for Wing was just a plain, ordinary cook, and a heathen who had a reputation of minding his own business. On the other hand, Hop was a clever sleight-of-hand performer and noted for his practical joking. He was as shrewd as he was clever, and while he afforded no little amusement for Young Wild West and his friends while they were in camp, he had on several occasions been the direct means of saving their lives.

He had his faults, of course, but of them later on. The distance to the patch of green was soon covered, and once they got there all hands lost no time in dismounting. The cacti plants reared themselves as high as fifteen feet, though the majority of them were not more than six or seven feet in height. It was of the species that is covered with sharp thorns, and this meant that they should not come in contact with them. The sun being now directly overhead, it was really difficult to find any shade without going among the gigantic plants. But Cheyenne Charlie quickly devised a means to offset this. He got an axe from one of the pack-horses and soon began cutting the plants down, so that a circular spot was formed large enough for them all to enter. While the sun was not entirely shut off, it was not difficult for them to find places where it was slightly cooler, and then the cook at once began his preparations for the noonday meal.

"Wild," said the young deadshot's sweetheart, as she sat down close to one of the thick stalks, "how far do you think it is across this desert?"

"Not more than forty or fifty miles at the most, Et," was the reply. "I happen to know that there is a long stretch of sandhills after we leave it, with here and there a water-hole and something in the way of vegetation. It won't be so bad when we reach that spot."

"Do you have an idea that we will find anything worth while by crossing the desert?"

"That's more than I can say, little girl. We came to it and we decided to ride across. All we have got to do is to guide ourselves by the sun, and we'll fetch out somewhere on a trail that will take us over to Tombstone."

"Yes, I suppose so. But it hardly seems as if we are going to meet even a bird that is worth shooting, let alone strike any game before we get over this place."

"That's all right. We have quite enough in the way of food, so you needn't fear about that. We also have enough water to last us until tomorrow night, and we could make it go a day longer if it were necessary. I'm sure we'll find both game and water before that time has expired."

It was not deemed necessary to kindle a fire. The fact was that none of them felt like getting anywhere near one just then. While they were pretty well acclaimed, the sun seemed to be hotter than usual on this particular day. Wing got out all that was necessary for them to eat just then, and they made something like a meal, washing the food down with the water they had with them, which was, of course, altogether too warm to be really palatable. But it was a great deal better than none at all, and no one registered a word of complaint.

"Now then, the sun has got around a little and the shade is growing all the time," Wild said, as he nodded to his sweetheart. "I reckon we'll stay here for an hour or so. It's altogether too hot to strike out across the glittering sand just yet."

"Might as well stay here till the afternoon is putty well gone, Wild," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up. "It will be moonlight tonight, an' I reckon it will be a whole lot cooler to travel."

"That's right, Charlie. I was thinking of that myself. Suppose we stay here until about four o'clock, and then keep on going until about eight or nine?"

"That will suit me all right. But I do hope something will turn up afore that time."

"I think something is going to turn up very soon," Jim Dart called out just then. "Look over there."

He pointed off to the left, and all eyes turned in that direction. Coming toward them over the sandy stretch was a riderless horse. The animal was at a walk, and appeared to be almost ready to drop.

"By jingo!" the young deadshot exclaimed, as he sprang from the shade and ran toward the horse. "I wonder what this means?"

All but the cook followed the boy, forgetting about the hot sun for the time being. As if the horse understood that it was going to get relieved, it started on a trot to meet them.

"Hop," the young deadshot called out, as he saw the clever Chinnee, as he was sometimes called, hastening along with them, "go and get a pail of water."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," and back he went in a hurry.

"An Indian pony," the young deadshot observed, as he caught the steed by the bridle. "No saddle, either. A blanket strapped upon his back with a sursingle, and that's all."

"Meanin'," Cheyenne Charlie observed, with a nod of his head, "that a redskin owns the nag."

"More than likely, Charlie," Wild answered, with a smile. "But where is the redskin?"

"Somewhere over that way, I suppose, Wild," Arietta answered quickly.

"Undoubtedly, and even though he is a redskin I mean to go and look for him without delay."

The horse was led to a shady place, and Hop proceeded to let it have some of the water he had drawn from one of the water kegs they had with them. Young Wild West paid no further attention to the riderless horse. He quickly mounted Spitfire and then rode away at a canter in the direction the horse had come from. It was quite easy for him to see the animal's tracks, and he continued on until he rounded a big sand-hill and could no longer see the friends he had left behind. As he had not asked anyone to accompany him, they remained there, though beyond the shadow of a doubt either Charlie or Jim, or Arietta even, would have been glad of the opportunity. But the boy probably had not thought of doing this, and did not think it strange that none of the rest started after him. Around the big sand-hill he went, and then he shaded his eyes with his hand and looked ahead. Something like a couple of hundred yards distant was a rocky formation with a huge bed of sand heaped against it on one side. The other happened to be the shady side, and the boy was sure he saw something that looked very much like a human form lying on the ground. He put his horse to a faster gait, and as he drew up he found that such was the case. Lying at full length on a ragged blanket was an Indian. At first the boy thought he was dead, but as he came a little closer and brought his horse to a halt, the body moved and the head was raised slightly. But it fell back again instantly.

"Hello, redskin!" Young Wild West called out, as he leaped to the ground and ran to the spot.

The Indian tried to say something, but he seemed to be choking, and it was not until he had made two or three attempts that he made the boy understand that he was in need of water.

"By jingo!" Wild exclaimed. "Why didn't I think and bring a canteen of water with me? This poor fellow is pretty near dead. I don't know whether he is a good Indian or a bad one, but I certainly am not going to see him perish for the want of a drink of water."

"Take it easy, redskin," he said. "I'll get you some water in a jiffy."

Then he quickly mounted Spitfire and rode out straight over the sand, for he knew he would catch a view of his companions all the quicker by doing so. As soon as he came in sight of them he brought his horse to a halt, and then shouted at the top of his voice:

"Fetch some water here."

Though it was quite some distance, his words were heard, and two minutes later Cheyenne Charlie came riding swiftly toward him. As soon as he knew that it was all right, the young deadshot rode back to the Indian again. The thought of being saved had put a little life in the fellow, for he had rolled over on his side and was now in a half-sitting posture, his head resting on his hand.

"I'll fix you all right in a couple of minutes, redskin," the boy said reassuringly. "Just take it easy. I can see that you are pretty nearly gone, but you'll be all right after you get a little water."

"Ugh!" came the feeble reply. "Paleface boy heap much good."

Cheyenne Charlie came around the sand-hill in short order, and seeing the boy standing there beside the helpless redskin, he galloped up without delay.

"An Injun, eh?" he said, as he handed Wild a canteen that held about a quart of water.

"That's right, Charlie, and he is almost gone, too."

The boy unscrewed the top of the canteen and, kneeling upon the ground, held the Indians' head with one hand and gave him a taste of the water with the other. The poor fellow made a grab for it, as if he was almost ready to swallow the canteen.

"Easy, redskin," Wild said, somewhat sharply. "I am doing this now. You just take a little at a time, or you will choke to death."

Then Wild proceeded to go at it in the proper way, and gradually he gave the sufferer a little more. When he had swallowed about a pint he deemed it sufficient for the time, and screwing the stopper on the canteen, he handed it to the scout, and said:

"Now then, I reckon we had better take him over and give him a bite to eat. Then he can have some more water, and probably he will be fit to mount his horse again."

"I reckon so, Wild," Charlie answered, and then he took a look at the redskin and shook his head.

But Cheyenne Charlie had little use for an Indian, anyhow. It was hard to make him believe that a good one ever lived, though he very often remarked that there were plenty of good ones dead. It was wonderful to see how rapidly the redskin gained strength. The water certainly had put new life in him, and he staggered to his feet and held out his hands and thanked his deliverers over and over again.

"Come here; redskin," Wild said, taking him by the arm.

Then with the assistance of Charlie he got him upon the back of Spitfire, and quickly mounted behind him. In this way he rode back to where the rest of the party was waiting, the scout following close behind. Like its master, the horse had improved wonderfully after drinking the water the Chinaman furnished it, and it was now nibbling at some tufts of dry grass that had been brought along in the stores.

"Here yer are, Jim," Cheyenne Charlie said, with a laugh. "Do you call this anything that amounts to much? Jest a common Injun an' his horse, that's all. We sartinly can't expect to git anything excitin' out of that."

"You can't tell what it may bring forth, Charlie," was the reply.

"Oh, of course not. We'll feed an' water the redskin an' his horse, an' most likely he'll rob us if he gits a chance, an' then sneak off. That's the way of most of 'em, anyhow."

"You shouldn't talk that way, Charlie," his wife spoke up, shaking her head. "This poor fellow was badly in need of assistance, and we shouldn't hesitate to give it to him."

"No, of course not, gal. I'd help a dyin' coyote if I was to come across one. I'd put a bullet through him an' end his misery."

The Indian was given a little more water, and then the cook furnished him with something to

eat. Of course, he would have taken a great deal more than they were ready to give him, but seemed satisfied as it was. At the end of half an hour after he had been brought to the spot the redskin seemed to be in pretty good shape again. He told our friends that his name was Big Wolf, and that he was a good Apache. When asked to explain how it was that he was alone on the desert, he hastened to reply that he had been driven to the desert by about forty of his tribe because he refused to go with them on the war-path. Young Wild West and his partners watched him closely as he was telling this, and they were forced to believe that he was stating the truth, for he was very earnest, and between times he would thank them for saving his life.

"Bad Injuns want to get the palefaces' gold," he said, pointing to the north and shaking his head, no doubt meaning that it was from that direction he had come when he left his companions.

"What palefaces?" Wild asked.

"The palefaces who came to the desert to look for gold."

"You mean prospectors, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Have any come this way lately?"

"Three suns ago four palefaces came this way. They had plenty of gold. The bad Apaches want to scalp them and take the gold. Big Wolf say no. He have to go away then, or they would shoot him. He ride into the desert and lose his way. No water, and he get heap much sick. Fall down and his horse go away."

"All right, Big Wolf. I reckon we'll see to it that the bad Apaches don't scalp the palefaces and get their gold. You can go with us until you get to some place where you think you are safe."

At this the Indian fell upon his knees and showed how pleased he was. One hour later Young Wild West and his friends set out to continue over the desert stretch, the Indian accompanying them.

CHAPTER II.—Hop Plays a Joke on Big Wolf.

The finding of the Indian caused Young Wild West to set out a little sooner than he had expected to. It was anything but pleasant where they had stopped for the noon rest, and if they let their horses walk the heat could hardly be found to be any more fierce. Big Wolf appeared to be quite strong, and when he had been given some water and something to eat about an hour after they set out, he was so thankful that even Cheyenne Charlie was satisfied that he was what might be called a pretty good sort of redskin, after all. The sun gradually sank in the west, and when it at last dropped below a distant range of mountains, the air became passably cool. Several times the party had rested, of course, for it was necessary to do this on account of the horses. Now the best part of the day arrived, and Young Wild West decided to keep right on until it got really dark before another halt should be made. He questioned the Indian and learned that he knew the country pretty well.

"Plenty to shoot and plenty water that way," Big Wolf said, as he pointed to the southwest. "We find before another sun goes down."

But the young deadshot had been in that vicinity before, so it was hardly necessary for the redskin to tell this. When darkness came a halt was called and then supper was served.

"We won't start a fire until we settle down for the night," the young deadshot declared. "Then we'll have some coffee and broiled venison."

"Goin' to keep right on till midnight, Wild?" the scout asked.

"I don't know, Charlie," was the reply. "We'll stop whenever the feeling comes over us."

They all had what might be called a lunch, and drank some more of the tepid water, after which they resumed the journey. The moon came up an hour later, and the scene was what might be called a beautiful one, since the sand hummocks and bunches of cacti showed up in a bluish sort of haze, while the different formations of rock that were scattered about assumed the shape of castles and buildings of ancient architecture. To one who had never been on an Arizona desert before, this would have been a great sight. But our friends were used to that sort of thing, so none of them commented upon it. It must have been about ten o'clock when Wild noticed that the girls appeared to be getting somewhat tired. Without saying anything he turned slightly to the left and headed toward a high formation of rock that was about two hundred yards distant. Reaching it he looked over the ground and decided that it was as good a place as any to pitch the camp.

"Whoa, Spitfire!" he said as he reined in the sorrel stallion close to the foot of a giant rock. "I reckon this is where we'll stop."

"Good!" Arietta exclaimed. "I was going to tell you that I was getting somewhat tired. But I had an idea you meant to stop here when you turned this way."

"You're good on the guess, Et," was the laughing retort. "Anyhow, we have covered quite a little distance since noon, and if I am not mistaken we will be on pretty good ground where water can be found and something to shoot at as well as before noon tomorrow."

Big Wolf went to assist the two Chinamen in unloading the pack-horses and making the preparations to remain there for the night, but he must have been a little weak, and knowing this, Young Wild West told him to take it easy. A fire was kindled with some fagots the two Chinamen had brought with them, and a kettle of coffee was soon boiling over it. Then Wing proceeded to broil some venison steaks, and with the biscuits they had on hand they managed to make quite a repast.

"That water is good enough to make coffee with, anyhow," Cheyenne Charlie declared, as he held out his tin cup to be filled for the third time.

"Coffee heap much good," the redskin said, as he took some more of the beverage.

After the meal was over it was not long before the girls bade the others good-night and retired to the tent which had been put up for them. Then about half an hour later Wild turned to Jim Dart and said:

"Now then, you'll take the first trick at doing guard duty, as usual, Jim. I feel rather tired out. It's so cool now that the change has made me sleepy."

"All right, Wild. I reckon I'll manage to keep my eyes open. I always do, anyhow, and while

I'll admit that I feel a little drowsy, it will soon wear off when I settle down to the fact that I have got to keep on the alert."

The Indian hearing this conversation looked at the young deadshot in surprise.

"Nobody come here," he declared, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You can't tell about that, Big Wolf," the boy answered. "We never run any chances."

"Maybe the boy tired."

"Yes, maybe he is. But he'll only keep awake for a couple of hours or so. Then Charlie will take his place, and after he has put in his watch I'll relieve him."

"Me watch."

"No, you needn't bother yourself, not tonight, anyhow."

The redskin nodded to show that he regarded the boy's decision as final, and then a little later he lay down upon the blanket that was given him and was soon sound asleep. The night passed quietly enough. Not a sound was heard to disturb them. Charlie took his trick, and when he had finished Wild took his, and at length the morning arrived. Big Wolf must have put in a very good night's rest, and it was not until the rattling of the cooking utensils that Wing made caused him to awaken. He apologized in his Indian way for not getting up before, but no one paid much attention to him, all declaring that he could sleep as long as he liked. While they were eating breakfast, Arietta saw a huge vulture circling high above them, as if looking for its prey. It was the first sign of anything living they had met with after finding the Indian, and the girl promptly called the attention of the others to it.

"Wild," she said, as she arose to her feet and started to get her rifle, which was leaning against the side of the tent. "I always detest a vulture, for I know what it is looking for."

"Yes, you know pretty well that it is looking for something to eat, little girl," the young deadshot retorted, with a smile.

"Yes, but it never goes after anything that is alive."

"You're right on that. Probably there's a dead horse or possibly the body of a human being lying somewhere about, and the vulture is anxious to get at it."

"Or else the big bird is expectin' some of us to die putty soon, and is waitin' for it to happen," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, a grim smile on his face.

"That isn't a joke, Charlie," his wife declared gravely.

"I didn't say it was. But that's what them vultures is always lookin' for. It's a wonder we didn't find some of 'em circlin' around above the redskin yesterday. But maybe they think he's goin' to turn up his toes, anyhow, an' they've come around waitin' for him to do it."

"The paleface maiden shoot the bird?" Big Wolf said solemnly as he saw Arietta raise her rifle to take aim.

"Yes, she will bring it down all right, redskin," Young Wild West answered, in his cool and easy way.

"She no shot straight to kill the bird," and the Indian showed that he felt positive of it.

"You think not, eh? Well, redskin, when that girl draws a bead on anything you can bet your

"If the bullet will find the mark. Now you just watch."

Arietta certainly heard them talking, but she paid not the least attention. Taking a deliberate aim at the circling vulture, she pulled the trigger. Crang! As the report rang out, the huge bird of prey made a dart and then up went one of its wings and over it turned, falling downward rapidly.

"That bird will never prey upon anything again, Wild," Arietta said, as she drew out the empty shell and placed a fresh cartridge in the magazine of her rifle.

Big Wolf ran fully a hundred yards to pick up the fallen bird. The bullet had passed clean through it, and it must have been killed instantly.

"Heap much shoot," he said, as he came back with it. "The paleface maiden make great fight."

"She has been in many fights, Big Wolf, and some of them have been with the people of your race."

"She shoot bad Apache?" and the Indian opened his eyes a little wider.

"Quite a few of them, I reckon."

"Good!" and then he shrugged his shoulders and turned his attention to the dead vulture again.

There was something in his action that caused a shade of suspicion to rise in Young Wild West's mind. Somehow he took it that the redskin they had saved from dying was not greatly pleased to know that Arietta could shoot so well. But he said nothing about it just then, and when the two Chinamen had loaded the pack-horses he gave the nod to make the start for the sand-hills, which the tract he expected to reach before noon was called by those who had been that way before. Big Wolf kicked the dead bird savagely before he mounted his pony, but after they had left the spot and were a hundred yards from it he was seen looking back at it.

"Wild," Cheyenne Charlie said, in a low tone of voice, as he rode up close to the young dead-shot, "that redskin seems to feel mighty funny about that vulture bein' shot."

"Think so?" the boy asked, looking at him curiously.

"Yes. I can't make out the meanin' of it, either."

"Well, I'll tell you, Charlie. He isn't feeling funny because the vulture was killed, but he seems to think it rather wonderful that Arietta was able to make such a good shot. It didn't strike him just right when she did it. Maybe he fears that she might take a chance at him with her rifle some time."

"There! I reckon you have got it, Wild," and the scout nodded his head vigorously. "Do you know one thing," he added, his voice becoming still lower, "I'm beginnin' to think ag'in that Big Wolf is no good. There never was a good Injun, anyhow. Maybe he's been lyin' to us, an' if he git the chance he'll clean us out an' then make off. We want to watch him sharp tonight."

"Charlie, an Indian is not supposed to act the same as we do, but as far as watching him is concerned, you can bet all you're worth it will be done. Of course, I wouldn't trust any sort of stranger until I was perfectly satisfied that he was all right. This Indian was very grateful for what we did for him, but that will soon wear away, no doubt, and if he is really bad, as you

think he is, it is bound to crop out sooner or later."

They continued on, and about the middle of the forenoon quite a breeze sprang up and the sand began to drift, after the fashion of snow in the northern regions in the winter time.

"Heap much good," Big Wolf declared to Jim Dart as he got up close enough to talk with him. "The bad Apaches can no follow now. The trail will be lost."

"Oh, did you think they might follow you?" Jim asked, looking at him in surprise.

"Maybe they follow. They want the scalp of Big Wolf because he no go with them to kill the palefaces."

"If that's the case you can bet they won't be able to follow any trail, for there won't be any to follow."

"Heap much good," and then Big Wolf fell back alongside of Hop Wah.

This seemed to be just what the clever Chinese wanted him to do. The fact was he had been itching for some time to have some fun with the redskin. He knew pretty well that Big Wolf was in pretty good shape, physically, now, and he thought that a fright would not at all injure him. The Chinaman had a mania for playing practical jokes, especially when there was nothing else for him to find amusement in. It was seldom indeed that he did not have a flask of liquor on his person, too, and just now he had a full quart divided into three flasks. Making an excuse to readjust the load on the pack-horse he was leading, Hop came to a halt, at the same time motioning the redskin to stop with him. Those ahead did not pay any attention to this, for such things were bound to happen at any time.

"You velly nicee ledskin," Hop observed, smiling and bowing to Big Wolf.

"Heap much nice Chinee," was the reply, as if he meant to be as polite as the Chinaman.

"You likee tanglefoot?"

"Fire-water?" Big Wolf asked, his eyes brightening.

"Yes, lat light. Allee samee goodee tanglefoot."

"Injun like fire-water. Chinee like tanglefoot."

"Allee light, Misler Big Wolf. You havee lillee dlink."

Then Hop produced the flask, taking care to turn his back toward those who were riding on ahead, their horses at a walk. He took a pull at the flask himself, and then permitted the redskin to have a swallow or two. That made him solid with him, so he quickly mounted his horse again and started off with the pack-horse. Big Wolf was bound to remain close to him now, for no doubt he felt that there might be another chance to get some of the whisky. But Hop had no intention of giving him any more of it just then. He did not know how long it might be before they reached a mining camp or settlement where he could replenish his stock, and he wanted it to last. Presently he lighted a big black cigar, and as he began puffing away the redskin sniffed the air and looked longingly at the cigar.

"You likee smokee, Misler Bigee Wolf?" Hop asked innocently.

"Heap much," was the quick reply.

"Allee light. Me givee you um cigar, len."

Then the Chinaman produced another cigar.

which was much larger than the one he was smoking. It was so large, in fact, that the Indian's eyes opened wide as he looked at it.

"Heap much cigar!" he exclaimed.

"Lat light. Velly muchee smoke."

Then he handed it over and, quickly striking a match, reached over and held it while the Indian got a light. It happened that Cheyenne Charlie looked around just then, and seeing the redskin puffing away at the big cigar, his face lighted up with a smile. He said something to those he was riding with, and then dropped back, for he knew pretty well what was going to happen. Usually the clever Chinnee carried with him a number of cigars that were loaded with gunpowder, and Charlie felt sure that this was one of them. Since he cared nothing for the redskin, he was anxious for the cigar to explode and see how Big Wolf would act. But the big cigar burned down more than an inch, and nothing happened. All hands were now looking back to see the fun, for, like Charlie, they knew what was probably going to happen.

"That's a blamed big cigar you have got, redskin," the scout remarked, as he dropped back to within a few yards of the Indian.

"Meap much cigar," was the reply.

Just then there was a snap like that caused by a cap exploding, and something popped from the end of the cigar and whirled about like lightning.

"Hip hi!" exclaimed Hop. "Whattée mattee?"

The redskin dropped the cigar as if it had been a hot potato, and almost fell from the back of his horse.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, and then he broke into a hearty laugh. "Blamed if a little bird didn't jump out of that cigar. There it is now."

He quickly dismounted and picked up the remains of the cigar, and, sure enough, there was something that had the semblance of a bird hanging to it by means of a spiral spring. But it was no bird, of course. It was simply a rather poor imitation of one. That spring and imitation had been tied with a string into a small space, and the leaves of tobacco rolled about it until the shape of a cigar was the result. The fire touching the string had liberated the spring, and hence the sudden appearance of the supposed bird and the whirring sound.

"Here yer are, Hop," the scout said, as he tossed the contrivance to the clever Chinnee. "I reckon you kin use that to make another cigar. Blamed if that Injun didn't think his last minute on earth had come."

"Heap much magic," was all Big Wolf declared, and then shaking his head solemnly he rode on to the head of the line, showing plainly that he wanted nothing more to do with the joking Chinaman.

CHAPTER III.—The Prospectors.

As the noon hour drew nearer the sun became so scorching hot that Young Wild West decided to stop in the shade of some high rocks and rest for a couple of hours. Before them lay the broad stretch of sand-hills, and the air being very clear, a faint blue line could be seen miles beyond. There was green vegetation here, and they all

knew it, but Wild was forced to admit that he had made a little mistake in his calculations. He expected to strike something green before noon. As they rode up to the high projection of rocks, one of the things quite uncommon to the average desert was discovered. It was a pool of water, and it took but a moment for them to see where it was fed from. A big stream of water trickled from a crack in the rock and flowed on down just fast enough to keep a few inches of water in the shallow spot where the pool had formed.

"That looks mighty good, anyhow!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, as he dismounted and ran to the water. "We'll jest see if it's all right."

"He was not long in sampling it, and then with a nod of satisfaction called out:

"Fetch along your cups, gals. Here's some nice cool water. It's as fine as you ever drank, an' I'll bet on it."

All hands were not long in taking advantage of the sudden piece of good luck that had come to them. Hop and Wing quickly produced some tin cups, and soon they were all drinking freely of the pure water. Big Wolf showed his pleasure in more ways than one. He thanked Young Wild West and his friends for having saved him, and then he thanked himself for having got away from the bad Apaches, after which he thanked the Great Spirit for having led them to the trickling water. While he was doing all this, Cheyenne Charlie was watching him sharply.

"Wild," the scout said, a few minutes later, when he got a chance to speak to the young dead-shot alone, "I'll bet the Injun was puttin' on when he was rattlin' off all that stuff of his jest now."

"You think so, eh, Charlie?"

"I sartinly do. It sorter seems to me that there's somethin' peculiar by the way he's actin'."

"I don't know what there could be, Charlie. Even though he's a very bad Indian, he certainly can do nothing to harm us."

"Maybe he can't. But he ain't to be trusted, as I've said afore, an' I'm goin' to stick to it, too."

The spot proved to be such a comfortable one that our friends remained there fully three hours. Then after filling everything they had that would carry water, they started off for the blue line to the south. The sand-hills were now so numerous that it was almost impossible to proceed in anything like a direct course. Some of them reared as high as thirty feet from the level ground. It was curious to think how the wind could perform such freaks, for it was the wind alone that was responsible for the hills on the desert waste. The stiff breeze that had been blowing early in the forenoon had died away now, and the sun was felt all the keener. On went the party, Big Wolf riding along and remaining silent for most of the time. It was only when someone spoke to him that he deigned to speak, and then it would be few words that would come from him. He kept looking anxiously a little to the left, and this soon became noticeable by all hands. Finally Cheyenne Charlie dropped back until he was alongside the redskin, and then pointing off to the direction he had noticed him looking so many times, he said:

"Do you expect to find somethin' over there, Injun?"

"Ugh!" and Big Wolf gave a start of surprise.

"Maybe you have got some friends over there waitin' for you," went on the scout.

"Paleface man heap much mistake. Me no got friends. Bad Injuns over that way," and he pointed directly behind them.

"Well, bad Injuns couldn't be your friends, ny-how, Big Wolf. But it sorter seems to me that you're a little nervous about somethin' that's over in that direction," and again Charlie pointed the way the redskin had been looking so often.

"Maybe we find the paleface men who are looking for the gold."

"Oh! You think maybe they're over that way, do you?"

The Indian nodded to show that he did. Charlie felt that he could go no further, though he was growing more suspicious than ever of Big Wolf. He rode back to the side of his wife, and then in a few minutes he advised Wild to turn slightly to the left, so they might proceed directly toward the spot Big Wolf thought the prospectors might be found. Half an hour later the Indian's supposition was verified, for suddenly three horsemen appeared from behind a gigantic sand-hill and came riding furiously to meet our friends.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, as he quickly unslung his rifle. "What's this?"

The horsemen waved their hats, showing their delight, and then motioned behind them. But though all hands looked keenly in that direction, they could see nothing but the stretch of sand-hills and the now green that lined a distant slope, for they had got close enough for the blue haze to melt away and leave in its stead what was really there. Wild and Charlie rode out to meet the horsemen, and as they came together and brought their horses to a halt, the young deadshot said:

"What's the matter, boys? You acted as if someone was chasing you."

"There was a lot of Injuns chasin' us, but when they seen you folks comin' they got back behind the sand-hills," one of them answered, and then he turned and looked back, shading his eyes as if he expected to see the redskins.

"What!"

Young Wild West was not a little surprised.

"That's right, young feller," one of the others said. "It seems that we're in hard luck. We started to git over the desert an' do a little prospectin' on the way. First a gang of redskins got after us jest as we struck the desert. Then we got away from 'em, 'cause it was jest about dark when we seen 'em; an' now jest as we struck somethin' that will pan out a hundred dollars to the pound, more Injuns has to show up. We're in hard luck, an' no mistake."

Wild looked the three over in silence for a few seconds, and he quickly made up his mind that they were telling the truth. While they were rough in appearance, there was the unmistakable look of honesty about them.

"So you struck it rich, eh?"

"We sartinly did, young feller," the one who had spoken first answered.

"How far is the spot from here?"

"Jest at the edge of the sand-hills where the ground is hard an' rocky. You kin see them high rocks that's shaped like a lot of houses that's been through an earthquake about six miles back over there."

"Yes, I can see the place."

"Well, it's right in there. It ain't likely the Injuns will find the place, 'cause we left it when we seen 'em comin' an' when they was a good two miles from us. They started after us when they seen us ridin' away, but they stopped when they seen you folks, as I said afore."

"What did you do with your outfit?"

"Left it over there. All covered up, too, an' it will only be luck if anyone finds it."

"Is there water there?"

"Yes, plenty of it, an' good water, too."

"That is somewhat surprising. It isn't more than an hour ago when we found water."

"You found that little pool, did you, with the tiny stream tricklin' down from the rocks?"

"Yes."

"Well, we stopped there last night."

"Oh, you did, eh?"

At this moment Wild happened to glance in the direction of Big Wolf. He saw the redskin listening attentively to all that was said, and the peculiar glitter in his eyes caused him to think that Cheyenne Charlie was perfectly right in his suspicions of him. But just what Big Wolf could be up to he had no notion just then. He had informed them that he had left a band of bad Apaches because he refused to join with them in killing and scalping some prospectors. That could be very true, and if it was, the three men they had just met were no doubt the prospectors. But the young deadshot knew pretty well that one redskin could not do them much harm, so he paid no further attention to it just then and let it drop from his mind. They were not long in learning that the three prospectors were named Buckley, Henderson and Reid. Cheyenne Charlie took pains to introduce the young deadshot, and as they had heard of him, the three showed their delight when they dismounted and tried to shake his hand all at the one time.

"I reckon we're all right now, boys," Buckley said, turning to his two partners. "Young Wild West has got the name of bein' able to clean out more Injuns than any ten white men ever thought of doin'. Jest let 'em git close enough an' we'll mighty soon show 'em that they ain't goin' to drive us away from the gold we've found."

"You don't mind taking us over to your claim, do you?" Wild asked.

"Sartinly not. We know blamed well that you wouldn't take it from us."

"Take it from you? Well, I rather think not. We'll help you hold it, and, if necessary, we'll assist you in carrying some of the dust away."

"And we'll divide up with you for doing it, too," Henderson declared.

"Oh, no," and the boy shook his head decisively. "Don't think for an instant that we want anything for any help we can render you. But never mind now. We'll go on over to your claim. You say there is water there, so you ought to be able to rig up a way to wash out the dirt so there won't be so much bulk to carry away with you."

"That's what we was thinkin' of doin'. But when the Injuns showed up we knowed we had better leave, especially when we seen your party comin'."

"Oh, you saw us before you started to leave the place, then?"

"Oh, yes. If we hadn't we would have stayed there, 'cause we could have held the Injuns off for

a while. We've got grub enough to last us for a couple of weeks. Three burros is over there, an' they was carryin' the grub an' other things."

"You left the burros there, too?" and Wild looked at him in surprise.

"We couldn't do nothin' else. But we tied 'em in among some rocks, an' it ain't likely the Indians would see 'em, unless they come putty close."

"Well, you can bet your life they would have found them soon enough. But it seems that they didn't come very far after seeing us. How many of them are there, do you suppose?"

"As many as twenty."

"Oh, that isn't a great number, then. Wait till I ask the redskin we have with us about this. Probably he may give us some information."

Then Wild walked over to where Big Wolf was standing by his horse, and said:

"Redskin, how many were there in your crowd when you left them?"

"Maybe fifty," was the reply.

"And because you didn't want to help them kill these three men you quit them and struck out across the desert. Is that it?"

"Yes."

Big Wolf said it eagerly, as if he was more than glad of the chance to express himself.

"Do you think that the redskins made a short cut and got over here ahead of them so as to keep them from leaving the sand-hills?"

"Maybe," and Big Wolf nodded.

"You're sure the Indians are not your friends?"

"Heap much want to kill me," declared Big Wolf.

"All right, then. That's all I want to know just now."

"Was that redskin with the gang what was after us?" Buckley asked Cheyenne Charlie, as he saw Wild walking toward his horse.

"He says he was. We found him jest as he was putty nigh croakin'. He was almost dead from the want of a drink of water. Seemed to be mighty thankful an' all that, but I don't like him, 'cause he's actin' in a funny sort of way. Strikes me that maybe he means to lead us into a trap."

"All redskins need watchin'," the man called Reid declared.

Five minutes later they had all mounted their horses and were riding toward the cleft of rocks where the prospectors had made a lucky strike. They kept their eyes open, and had their rifles in readiness, but not the least sign of a redskin could be seen. When they finally reached a rocky piece of ground which must have covered an area of ten square acres, Young Wild West gave a nod of satisfaction and said:

"This is what I call something like it. I am heartily glad we have got away from that glittering white sand."

"But there's more of it lyin' beyond, Wild," the scout declared, as he pointed off to the south.

"Yes, but not more than five or six miles of it, anyhow. It won't take us long to get over that stretch."

"There's sand-hills all around us now, ain't there?"

"Right you are. It seems that we are right in the midst of them. Rather queer that this hard piece of ground with all the rocks should be right in the midst of the sand-hill district. But that

goes to show that nature is peculiar, and there is little that should surprise one."

The three prospectors rode along to the spot where they had hidden their outfit. They were not long in unearthing it, and then the three burros were found tied in a little cave close by.

"I reckon this wouldn't be a bad place if as many as five hundred Indians got after us," Jim Dart remarked, as he looked around and nodded his head approvingly. "We could make a regular fort of it."

"Well, I reckon we'll stay here until tomorrow, anyhow," Young Wild West said, as he looked around and saw how comfortably things could be made with a little trouble. "We'll lend a hand to Buckley and his pards, and if they really have struck a rich vein here, we'll help them get out as much as they can carry away. Get busy, you two heathens, and put up the tents."

"Misler Wild," Hop said hurriedly, as he ran up to the young deadshot, "where um ledskin?"

"Why?" came the reply, and then the boy looked around in surprise.

"He no comee here, Misler Wild."

"Yes, he did come here," the scout spoke up. "He was right with us when we stopped."

"He no here now, Misler Wild," and Hop cast a searching look around them.

Sure enough, Big Wolf had disappeared. Young Wild West and his partners clambered up to the top of a high projection and looked around. But the Indian was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER IV.—Big Wolf Comes Back.

Young Wild West was not long in satisfying himself that Big Wolf had really taken his departure. Both the Indian and his horse were certainly gone. As the young deadshot looked around at the sand-hills which lay scattered here and there, he could easily understand why it was that the redskin could not be seen. Naturally, if he wanted to slip away without their knowledge, he would take pains to hide himself from their view, and the sand-hills would afford this readily enough.

"The sneakin' coyote has sartinly left us, Wild," Cheyenne Charlie declared, after he had made a search about the premises.

"That's all right," was the reply. "Let him go. But maybe after all there is nothing really wrong about him. It might be that he rode away, thinking we were aware of it, for the purpose of spying upon the redskins who were after the prospectors."

"It might be that way, Wild," the scout answered, with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I don't believe it. You won't see him comin' back ag'in, an' you kin bet on it."

"All right. In that case we'll simply say that it is good riddance."

The three prospectors were not long in getting to work in straightening things out at the camp, which had been abandoned in such a hurry. Young Wild West and his friends selected a suitable spot, and the two Chinamen were not long in erecting the two tents that were used as a sleeping quarters by the party. When this had been done, Wild and Arietta walked over to the spot where the three men had made what they called their great

discovery. There was a dry pocket running back under a solid rock, and it was here that they had found the gold dust. As Wild reached into the opening with his hand and touched one of the sides, the sand trickled down in streams. He pulled out a handful and examined it.

"Plenty of gold here," he said, nodding to Buckley. "It looks as though the hardest part of the work will be to wash it."

It does look that way, don't it?" and the man showed his elation by nodding his head vigorously, while his eyes glistened with joy and satisfaction.

"Did you have any idea that you were going to find gold over this way?" the young deadshot asked, looking at him closely.

"Yes," was the reply. "We had that idea, 'cause we met a man about a month ago who had been over this way. He came back loaded with gold dust, but he soon got rid of it all, an' then got killed in a fight. Two or three times when he had been drinkin' putty hard he let it out that somewhere down this way was where he found the dust. He was expectin' to come back here an' bring some men with him. I was one that was to go."

"So after he got killed you came, anyhow?"

"Yes, that's it. Lucky to find the place, wasn't we?"

"Rather lucky. But I suppose he gave you a description of it."

"Not exactly. But he said enough to make me figure out jest about what kind of a place it was. I sorter thought this was where he got the gold when we got here. It's a mighty good thing you folks happened to come along jest as you did, for them Injuns would sartinly have cleaned us up, I s'pose."

"It looks as if the redskins knew something about the gold, too."

"No, they didn't know nothin' about it. We caught one of 'em spyin' on us the night after we passed a big bunch of 'em. We thought they was peaceable Injuns, an' they was, as far as their actions went. They wanted some tobacco an' we give 'em what we could spare an' then went on. But that night, as I jest said, one of 'em was caught hangin' around our camp. Most likely he had been there some time an' had heard us talkin' about what we was lookin' for."

"You didn't have a good look at the redskin what was spyin' on you, did you?" Cheyenne Charlie spoke up.

"No, we didn't."

"Well, I'll bet I know who it was."

"You ain't thinkin' that it was the Injun what sneaked away a little while ago, are you?" Buckley asked.

"That's jest what I'm thinkin'."

"Then he's a traitor."

"Of course he is. Most bad Injuns is traitors when they git a chance to show it. We saved the sneakin' coyote's life, an' now he's gone away to look for his gang, an' the chances are he'll be comin' back with 'em afore to-morrow mornin'. But let 'em all come. This here place is a regular fort, an' if we can't hold it agin all the Injuns there is around these parts, my name ain't Cheyenne Charlie an' I wasn't born in old Cheyenne."

Wild and his partners made a thorough examination of the prospectors' great find. They were not long in discovering that the pocket did not ex-

tend very far, but what there was that could be taken from it certainly was plentiful. A handful of the sand weighed heavily, and there was no mistaking the glitter of the gold or its fineness.

"You folks has got to have a share in this here mine," Buckley declared, as Wild showed him the best way to make use of the stream of water to wash out the pans of dirt.

"Oh, no, was the reply. "Don't think that we want any of your gold dust. I have an idea that there won't be more than enough to make the three of you rich, and hardly that much. Sometimes a pocket like this extends a great ways, and connects somewhere with a mother lode. I have seen just such places as this, and it strikes me that it won't take long to exhaust it. Now you can go right ahead just as if there were no Indians about. We are going to stop here with you until to-morrow, anyhow. If the redskins interfere with you by that time, I reckon you ought to have about all you can carry away with you."

"If they don't interfere with us afore that time, most likely they'll be layin' for us when go back across the desert," Henderson spoke up.

"Is it necessary that you cross the desert again? Why not strike out along close to the line of Mexico and work your way into Tombstone? You certainly can get rid of all your gold dust there and receive what it is worth."

"That would be a good idea, wouldn't it, Buckley?"

"It sartinly would," was the reply. "We had better do jest as Young Wild West says."

"We couldn't do no better, that's sartin," Reid declared.

"All right, then. We'll help you to-morrow, and if we find that I am right in my way of thinking, the pocket will be exhausted before noon. Of course there may be other smaller pockets around, but that's all right. You can come back later on, or perhaps you might organize a little company and come here and work the claim thoroughly."

Assuring the three that they need not bother about keeping a watch for the Indians, the young deadshot mounted a high projection of rock so he might be able to have a good look at the surrounding country. He had barely reached the high spot when Arietta joined him.

"What do you think of the situation, Wild?" the girl asked, as she sat down beside him.

"Well, I don't know as there's anything so awful bad about it," was the reply. "What do you mean, little girl?"

"I can't help thinking about that redskin. See how thankful he was when we saved his life. What do you suppose made him leave in such a sneaky way."

"There's only one thing to suppose, Et. He is a traitor, and he has gone to join the redskins. I think now that he was out looking for them and that he got lost on the desert. It doesn't take a great while to put a man near death when he's under the scorching sun and without any water. Then again, maybe he wasn't half as bad off as he made out. If you remember, it did not take him a great while to get as strong as ever."

"Yes, I noticed that, Wild. But surely he can't assist the Indians a great deal, for the best they can do would be to attack us and make us stand a siege."

"There will have to be a whole lot of them if

they make us stand a siege, little girl. If there are no more than a score of them we will clean them out in short order, and when we get ready to leave here we will simply mount our horses and ride away."

While the boy was speaking he was keeping a sharp look around, only glancing at the girl beside him. Suddenly he saw a horseman ride from behind a big sandhill half a mile away.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "If I am not much mistaken, Big Wolf is coming this way."

The horseman and rider were lost to view behind another of the sand-hills before Arietta caught a glimpse of him. The two waited a few seconds, and then the horseman appeared again.

"It's Big Wolf, Wild!" Arietta exclaimed. "He's coming this way, too. That shows pretty well that you're mistaken in thinking that he is a traitor. Probably he has gone out to do a little spying for our benefit."

"Probably," and the young deadshot shrugged his shoulders.

The two sat there, and soon the Indian was so near them that they could see him all the time. Straight for the high rocky place he made his way, and when he was within a couple of hundred yards of it Wild and his sweetheart descended to the hollow below.

"The redskin is coming back, boys," Wild said, as he nodded to his two partners, who looked questioningly at him, for they seemed to think that he had something important to tell them.

"What!" the scout exclaimed, starting violently. "Comin' back, is he? I wonder where he's been?"

"Over that way," and the boy pointed to the south. "I reckon he must have been doing a little spying on the redskins who were after the prospectors."

"That's all right," the scout retorted, while a grim smile showed on his face. "We'll jest ask him a few questions when he gits here."

The clatter of hoofs sounded just then, for Big Wolf's horse had struck the hard ground. Wild and his partners walked out to meet him, and as the Indian rode up there was a look of triumph on his face.

"Me find the bad Apaches," he declared as he reined in his horse and dismounted. "Plenty of them over there. They make heap much fight pretty soon."

"Is that so?" Wild asked, as he stepped up and touched him on the shoulder, at the same time looking straight in his eyes. "Who told you to go and look for the redskins, Big Wolf?"

"Nobody tell me," was the reply, and then he shrugged his shoulders and appeared to be surprised.

"You sneaked away without saying a word, didn't you?"

"Me see you all look very much around here, so me go to find out something."

"Oh, that's it, eh? And you have discovered that there are a lot of redskins over there and that they mean to attack us pretty soon?"

"Yes, Young Wild West."

"How much good does it do us to know what we knew before you set out?"

"Make ready to fight the bad Apaches."

"I reckon we are ready for them. Now then, how many Apaches are there, Big Wolf?"

"Maybe hundred."

"Did you tell them it would be easy to clean us out when they came over here?"

"Me no speak to the Apaches. They no see me," declared Big Wolf, acting somewhat uneasily.

"See here, redskin," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up, a flash of anger in his eyes. "you can't fool us one little bit. You're a blamed traitor, that's what you are, an' you know what happens to traitors. There's a high rock up there which a rope kin go over mighty easy. The next thing you know you'll be hangin' there dead."

"Me good Injun. Paleface man heap much mistake," declared Big Wolf, solemnly.

The scout was about to say something further, when Wild shot a warning glance at him.

"Big Wolf," the young deadshot said. "we took you in with us when you were nearly dead from the want of water. Now then, you are welcome to stay here. The information you have given us might be of some use, after all, since you say there are about a hundred of the redskins. But don't you leave this place again without first asking permission. If you do, something might happen to you."

"Me very sorry," was the reply. "Me good Injun. Me do what Young Wild West say."

Wild did not try to prevent the Indian from seeing the gold pocket, so a little later when Big Wolf walked over there and watched the three prospectors who were working away, he simply walked up to him and said:

"What do you think of it, Big Wolf? The prospectors have found plenty of gold."

"Heap much gold," was the reply. "Me very glad."

"You likee havee um cigar?"

The question came from Hop, who stepped from behind the rock, a big black cigar in his hand.

He looked at the Indian, and the cheerful smile on his smile made him appear very innocent.

"Indian no want cigar," Big Wolf declared, as he straightened up and looked somewhat angry. "Chinee make plenty fun. Me no smoke."

"Don't play any more tricks on him, Hop," Wild said, somewhat severely, as he motioned the Chinaman to go away. "Big Wolf is a good Indian, so he says, and we are going to give him a chance to prove it. If it happens that he has been lying to us, Cheyenne Charlie is going to hang him to that spur up there."

"Lat velly nicee place to hangee ledskin, Misler Wild," Hop answered, smilingly, as he looked up.

Big Wolf shrugged his shoulders and then turned and walked over to his horse. As yet he had not removed the bridle, so he now took his lariat and tying it about the animal's neck, led it over to where the rest of the horses were standing. There was not a great deal to eat for the steeds in the rocky place, though here and there some coarse grass was growing. The Indian must have noticed this, for after looking around a while he walked over to Wild and said:

"Maybe Young Wild West want some grass for the horses. Plenty over there."

He pointed off to the southwest.

"You would like to go and get some for us, I suppose," the boy answered, a smile on his face.

"No, me stay here. You go. Take somebody with you."

"That will be all right, Big Wolf. I reckon we can make out until tomorrow. We are going away

from here tomorrow afternoon, anyhow. It won't be the first time our horses have been forced to go without much to eat."

"You go away tomorrow?" and the redskin turned and looked over at the three prospectors who were still at work.

"Yes. I reckon they will have all the gold dust cut by that time. It isn't a very large pocket, Big Wolf."

The Indian nodded, but still seemed to be somewhat puzzled. After that he had nothing to say, though every time he saw any one making a move to arrange things about the camping spot he would offer his assistance. The afternoon slipped by, and supper-time came. The fire was kindled, and the prospectors got out their coffee-kettle and hung it along with the one the cook put over the fire. Having a good supply of all that was needed, our friends had no cause to worry. The only thing that handicapped them was that in case they had to stand a siege the horses would run short of something to eat. But that the Indians would make an attack before morning they all felt certain, and they meant to see to it that they got a very warm reception.

CHAPTER V.—The Band of Apaches and Their Leader.

It will be in order for us to turn our attention to the Indians who were so anxious to catch the three prospectors. When it is stated that they had a white man leading them it will not seem at all strange. The white man was called Bug Houseman, who, like Buckley and his two parads, had learned about the gold that was to be found in the desert. Bug, as we will call him, was a very bad character, and when he discovered that the three prospectors were going to strike out over the desert and look for the pocket, he at once proceeded to make arrangements to follow them.

It was not at all strange that he should be friendly with some bad Indians who were hanging about the mining camp. He happened to have a good supply of money, so after purchasing a lot of whisky he quickly got the Indians to agree to gather up as many as they could and follow the three men so they might take possession of the claim should they find it. The redskins were promised the part of killing and scalping the prospectors, as well as a share of the gold that might be found. Luck was with Bug, for, incited by the whisky that had been given them, the few bad Indians rode away in different directions, and in a few hours gathered together a force that numbered as many as ninety. Eager for the chance to scalp a few palefaces, they accepted the offer of the villainous white man and set out on the trail of the prospectors.

Bug thought it necessary to send one of them ahead, and he chose Big Wolf for the purpose, since he was really the most crafty of the lot, and was skilful and daring. But Big Wolf took a flask of whisky with him and got lost on the desert. He remained a day and night there without anything to eat or drink, and bewildered from the effects of the liquor he had imbibed, he had at last lain down to sleep. It has already been described how he was discovered by Young Wild

West and his friends, and their suspicions of him were certainly correct. Bug Houseman had divided the redskins into three parties after Big Wolf had failed to show up. The largest of the parties was sent straight to the south, while the other two scoured the desert in search of the missing Indian, at the same time being on the watch for the prospectors they were following.

As luck would have it, they met less than three miles from the very spot the prospectors were looking for. This was just about the time when our friends left the place where they had halted during the noon hour. In order to make it plain why Big Wolf had left in such a mysterious fashion, we must state that he had caught sight of an Indian signal, which told him just where he might expect to find his friends. It was easy for him to leave the party, for they certainly were very much interested at the time they arrived at the rocky place which the prospectors had left in such a hurried manner a short time before. Big Wolf had seen what our friends had not. He had actually caught a view of some of the Indians who were after the prospectors. The wily redskin knew he could easily get out of view because of the sand-hills, and he had joined the party in a hurry. Bug Houseman was delighted to see him, and when the treacherous Indian had told him all about Young Wild West and his friends and the prospectors, he advised him to go back without delay and make them believe that he had simply doing a little scouting for their benefit. Bug was one of the sort of men who can make friends with anybody who is inclined to be bad.

He talked in such a way to the redskins that they believed he was really a wonderful paleface, and they expected they would all get a generous lot of gold dust as well as a few paleface scalps. Knowing just where the party was located, Bug began planning to make an attack. He was foxy enough to know pretty well that it would be a dangerous proceeding to advance there in broad daylight, and Big Wolf had told him enough to make him feel that it would not be safe to get within rifle shot of the place, since Young Wild West was the Champion Deadshot. But he did not mean to run amuck of a risk. He had the Indians at his command, and they were eager to clean out the palefaces and get the gold. He would let them do the fighting, while he remained at a safe distance.

The spot where they had camped was quite suitable for their needs, since there was both water and fodder for their horses. It was not much in the way of supplies that the redskins had brought with them, for they had come hurriedly. Yet there was quite some game in the vicinity, and after he had dispatched the redskin traitor back to the camp of Young Wild West, Bug advised that some of the Apaches go out and shoot some game. A dozen or more set out on horseback, and then Bug sat down in the shade of a tree and, calling two of the Indians he knew he could put confidence in, invited them to play cards with him. These two, with Big Wolf, were what might be called cronies of the rascally white man, for they had met on several occasions and had indulged in good times, so to speak. Whatever else Bug might have been, he was not much at playing poker. The game went on until it was near sunset, and though the ante had been small, he arose

in disgust, finding himself to be about twenty dollars the loser.

"You're foxy redskins," he declared. "You know too much for me. But it's all right. We'll play ag'in some time. Now then, I reckon we had better think about gittin' ready for what we've got to do to-night. I wonder what in thunder is keepin' them fellers away so long. They've been out long enough to shoot enough game to last us a week."

"They shoot plenty times," one of the redskins answered. "Me hear them."

"They need to shoot plenty times. We ain't got much grub on hand."

It was a rather deep hollow where the camp had been established, so there was no danger of a blaze being seen by those who were stationed in the rocky place upon the desert. Soon three or four fires had been started, and the redskins, who were divided into groups, began preparing something to eat. It was just about dark when they started to eat what they had, and then they heard those who had been sent out to hunt returning. Bug Houseman was chewing away upon a tough piece of bacon and holding a tin cup of steaming coffee in his hand when the dozen Indians came back. When he saw they had a big buck with them and several jack-rabbits, he nodded his head approvingly.

"You fellers is all right," he declared. "The best thing you kin do is to go ahead an' cook most of that venison to-night. Smoke what's left, so we kin eat it without cookin', if it comes to the point. We've got a tough job on our hands, 'cause I don't imagine we're goin' to take possession of that gold claim very easily. There's quite a few over there, an' they're all got rifles. Our only chance is to sneak up close in the dark to-night an' then jump on 'em afore they know what's up. Now then, redskins, I'm goin' to be mighty good to you all, an' when we git hold of this gold an' all the scalps you want, we'll light out an' soon find a place where fire-water kin be bought. Then you kin bet that plenty of it will flow, an' you'll have the biggest time of your life. Maybe there'll be more paleface scalps to be found, too. I want you to all join me in givin' three cheers, which means that we're goin' to have a whole lot of luck. Now then, let yourselves go."

The villain really felt elated because so much game had been brought in, and as he waved his hat every redskin there broke into a cheer. While it was possible that the yelling might not have been heard at the camp of Young Wild West, none of them seemed to care whether it was or not. The reckless and pleasing way he had about him made Bug Houseman a favorite with the redskins. Those who knew him best could not truthfully say that he had not always done as he agreed to, and while this was probably the worst venture they had started in, the Apaches seemed to feel that he would carry them through all right, and that they would have a big time of it.

The villainous leader of the redskin gang sat down and watched the braves as they removed the skins from the deer and the big jack-rabbits they had shot. There was certainly plenty to eat now, and he appreciated the fact, even though there was very little to mix up biscuits. For over half an hour he sat watching, and when at last the task was completed, and the meat was cut up and hung upon the limbs of the adjacent trees, so it

would safe from any prowling beast, Bug began to think of the attack that was to be made. Probably there might have been as many as fifty sand-hills lying between the semi-tropical spot where the Indians were camped and the big patch of rocky land where the prospectors had discovered the gold. It being moonlight, the sand-hills would come in handy, so they might creep up and take the palefaces, as the Indians called them, completely by surprise. Bug thought it over for a few minutes, and then decided that it would be better to wait until about night before doing anything.

"Maybe Big Wolf will show up afore that time an' let us know jest how things are over there," he said to one of his redskin friends.

"Maybe palefaces no let Big Wolf come," was the reply, for evidently the Apache thought the treacherous Indian might be under suspicion for having left the party without letting them know of it.

"Don't you believe anything like that, Dog," Bug declared, with a confident smile. "Wolf knows his business all right. I've known him for three years now, an' I'll say he's about the smartest redskin I ever came across."

Dog as he was called, seemed to think the same way, for he gave an answering nod in an approving way. He was one of those who had won money from the leader in the poker game, and when he learned that they were not to leave the camp until midnight, he proposed that they play some more.

"Not with me," Bug retorted. "You're too much for me, Dog. You kin stack the cards, an' that's more than I can do. I don't know where you learned it."

"The palefaces showed me how to play poker many moons ago."

"Well, they showed you all right, but I'll bet you improved a lot on what they showed you."

"Me find out how to cheat," the Apache declared, proudly.

"I know you did, an' you kin do it mighty fine. If you want to play now, jest go an' find some of your own crowd."

"Injuns got no money. You got plenty money."

"No, I ain't got plenty. I'm gittin' putty nigh broke. We'll all have plenty of it in a few days from now, though. We'll git hold of that gold dust them prospectors have found, and hit the trail for Tombstone."

"Must kill all the palefaces afore we go," Dog said, looking very serious.

"I'm leavin' that for you Injuns to do. Of course, I ain't goin' to have nothin' to do with any killin'. You want the fun of it, so go ahead an' have it. But you had better look out how you carry the scalps you take. Them is bad things. They would give you away in a hurry."

"No let the palefaces in Tombstone see the scalps."

At that moment excited shouts were heard close to the camp. The Indians began running swiftly in the direction, and then a voice called out loudly:

"Hip hi! Helpee me. Um ledskins allee samee gottee me."

"What in thunderation does this mean?" cried Bug Houseman, his face the picture of amazement.

But there was no one there to answer, for it seemed that every redskin in the camp had started

in the direction the cries came from. Bug started the same way, and in less than a minute he saw a big crowd coming back. Two of the braves had a prisoner, and when he was brought into the light of the fires, the villain saw that it was a Chinaman.

"Great wildcats!" he exclaimed. "Where did that feller come from?"

"Injuns ketch the Chinese," one of them answered.

"From the camp in the sand-hills, most likely," Bug answered with a nod of satisfaction. "That will be all right. There's one less to bother us when we go over there to-night. Jest fetch that heathen here, an' I'll ask him a few questions."

The Chinaman was no other than Hop Wah, Young Wild West's Clever Chineese, and he was quickly hustled before the leader of the villainous band of redskins.

CHAPTER VI.—Hop Gets Into Trouble.

When the supper was over at the camp of Young Wild West, Hop Wah slipped over to where the young deadshot was standing and said:

"Misler Wild, you say maybe you go findee um ledskins when it gittee allee samee dark."

"I believe I did say something like that, Hop," Wild answered, as he turned and looked at him.

"Me wantee go, too, Misler Wild. Me velly smartee Chineese. Me findee ledskins velly muchee quickee."

"You'll find them, and most likely you'll get in trouble, too, Hop."

"Me no gittee in trouble, Misler Wild. If me do gittee in trouble me allee samee gittee outtee trouble velly muchee quickee. Me velly smartee Chineese."

"I suppose you're about right on that. Usually you have a way of getting out of trouble when you once get in it. But you must remember that this gang of redskins started out to get the scalps of the prospectors. When they see that pigtail of yours they might take a notion to remove it."

"Lat allee light, Misler Wild. No ledskin ever gittee um pigtail yet. If um ledskins ketchee me, maybe me havee lilliee fun. Me gottee fivee, sixee bigee fireclackers, and plenty whattee you callee fir works. Makee plenty led and blue light and velly muchee bang. Allee samee Fourth of July."

"Wild," Arietta said, looking somewhat amused, "I really believe Hop likes to be made a prisoner by bad Indians and outlaws. It is seldom indeed that even the least harm comes to him when he does. Certainly he has always managed to get away."

"That's right, little girl," the young deadshot replied. "But there have been a few times when he never would have got away if it hadn't been for Charlie, Jim or myself. He knows that well enough."

"Me knowee lat, Misler Wild. Two, thlee times me havee you and Misler Charlie and Misler Jim."

"More than that, Hop, and you can bet we all appreciate it. Well, since you want to go with us you may do so. I'll just question Big Wolf again, and find out how far it is to the camp of the redskins."

with a pipe and tobacco, and with his eyes fixed upon the ground he was puffing away, apparently in a thoughtful mood. He looked up when Wild, Arietta and Hop strolled over to him and sat down on some rocks that were right before him.

"Big Wolf," the young deadshot said, looking at him sharply, "you saw where the Apaches were camped when you went out to spy upon them."

"Yes," came the quick reply.

"How far is it from here?"

"Maybe three miles. No more. Right that way," and he arose on his feet and pointed out the direction.

"And you say that there is about a hundred of them?"

"Maybe a hundred."

"They have plenty of rifles, I suppose."

"Maybe half a hundred."

"All right. I am going to go over there and find out if you have told the truth."

"You go to the Apaches?" Big Wolf asked, almost eagerly.

"Yes. But that don't mean that I am going to let them see me. I may take a notion to bring a couple of them back here prisoners, however. If I do you will have a chance to tell them how glad you were that you did not remain with them."

"Young Wild West heap much brave."

"Something like that, I reckon. But I want to tell you one thing, Big Wolf. You must stay right here and not attempt to leave the camp. I am going to leave Jim Dait to watch you, and you can bet your life if you try to sneak off like you did when we arrived here late this afternoon he will put a bullet through you in a jiffy."

"Paleface boy shoot good Injun?" and the traitorous Apache acted as if he could hardly believe such a thing possible.

"Yes, he wouldn't hesitate to do it, either. But I guess he won't have to do such a thing, for you are going to do just as I tell you."

"Big Wolf will do as Young Wild West says. Me good Injun. Me very glad you save my life. Me hate bad Apaches, and will never go with them again."

"The last of what you say will be true, I think. It strikes me that you will never go with them again. But as far as the rest is concerned, it don't matter. Now then, you know what you are expected to do, so don't even ask permission to leave the camp until I return."

"You velly nicee ledskin," Hop declared, as Wild and Arietta turned and left the spot. "Maybe me bling you nicee bigee cigar, so be."

"Chinee heap much fool," grunted Big Wolf. "Make fun with poor Injun."

"Allee light. If you no wantee um cigar maybe me bling you lilliee tanglefoot."

"Fire-water!" and Big Wolf became all attention instantly.

"Velly muchee fire-water, so be."

"Maybe you got some fire-water now."

"Maybe me gottee allee samee plenty tanglefoot," and Hop patted the side of his coat, signifying that he had a flask in his pocket.

"Give Injun some fire-water."

"You waitee till me allee samee comee back, Misler Big Wolf. Len me givee you um nicee lilliee dlink of tanglefoot."

The Chinaman grinned tantalizingly and left.

There was no doubt but that Big Wolf hated Hop for the trick he had played upon him, if for no other reason. Wild was not long in letting Cheyenne Charlie knew that he was to accompany him on the scouting trip. But when Charlie learned that Hop was going along he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"That heathen has always got to be puttin' his nose into things, Wild."

"Never mind," was the reply. "He wants to go, and he declared that if he gets into trouble he will be able to get out of it again, so I am going to let him go."

"Oh, sartin. I ain't findin' fault 'cause you told him he could go with us. But it seems to me that he's got spoiled. He thinks he's about as good as a white man."

"He's been pretty good to you when the occasion demanded it, I think."

"You bet he has. Don't think for a minute that I've got a grudge ag'in him, or that I don't think he's all right. But sometimes he makes me blamed mad by his foolish capers an' the tricks he plays on me. But when are you goin' to strike out, Wild?"

"Right away. I think. I just want to tell Jim and the prospectors to keep a sharp watch on the redskin. You can bet that he isn't going to get the chance to sneak away from here while we're around."

Jim and Eloise were sitting close to one of the tents where the fire was burning brightly, and when Wild walked over and told the boy what was to be expected of him, he simply nodded his head and said:

"All right, Wild. Big Wolf will not leave the camp, you can depend on that."

"I know he won't, Jim, but I'll just speak to the prospectors about it, and they can keep a watch, too."

It seemed that Buckley and his two partners liked to keep together. While it virtually might have been called one camp, they had thrown their blankets under a ledge fifty feet from the two tents, and they were now sitting there with a lighted lantern hanging to a projecting rock above their heads. The gold dust they had washed out had been placed in bags they had brought with them for the purpose, and they seemed to be guarding them in a jealous way. Wild could not help noticing this when he approached them.

"Say, Buckley," he said, with a smile, "are you afraid some one will come along and steal that gold dust?"

"Sartinly not, Young Wild West, unless it might be some of them Injuns. I don't want you to think that we're afraid of any of you folks takin' any of it, 'cause you know you're welcome to your share of it."

"I know that, Buckley. But the way you three fellows are sitting there with those bags piled up against the rock behind you made it appear as if you were guarding them."

"It ain't that, Young Wild West," Henderson said earnestly, as he arose to his feet. "I'll tell you what it is. We're mighty proud of havin' found the pocket, an' it sorter makes us feel good to have the stuff right near us."

"That's it!" exclaimed Reid. "I was tryin' to think of what to say to make you understand.

Henderson has got it jest right. All three of us is blame proud to own so much gold dust."

"All right. I don't blame you in the least. Keep right on being proud of it. But say, I came over here to ask you if you mind keeping a watch on the redskin. I am going over close to the camp of the redskins and try and find out when they mean to make an attack. Cheyenne Charlie and Hop Wah will accompany me, and I am leaving Jim Dart in charge. He won't let the redskin get away, of course, but it will be just as well if you, fellows will keep an eye on him, too."

"You kin bet we will," Buckley declared, while the other two nodded their heads. "How long are you goin' to be gone?"

"I don't know exactly. But if Big Wolf is telling the truth, the redskin camp isn't more than three miles from here. We'll ride over there at a fair pace and come back the same way, unless we happen to be pursued. We'll put it two hours, though it might be a little more."

"It makes no difference if you're gone all night. We'll see to it that the redskin don't sneak away from here, even if Jim Dart goes to sleep."

"You can bet your life that Jim will never go to sleep while we are away. All right, boys. Stay right close to your gold dust and make your plans as to what you're going to do when you get it converted into cash. Build all the air castles you can, and I earnestly hope that some of them will not tumble down. You certainly have struck it pretty rich, and when you get safely to Tombstone I'll be just as pleased as you are."

The girls did not seem to regard their position as being much of a perilous one. But as they invariably did, they warned Wild and Charlie to be very careful. They had learned enough to make them understand that the band of Indians were after the scalps of the palefaces, and this meant that should they fall into the hands of the Apaches, they might be killed in a hurry. But Wild and the scout laughed at their fears and, saddling their horses, were soon ready to leave. Of course, Hop got his piebald cayuse ready, too, and when they mounted he did likewise.

"Take it easy, girls," Wild said, as he started to ride out of the hollow that lay among the rocks. "We'll be back in a couple of hours, I think. But if we are not we'll surely come a little later. Maybe we might come in a hurry, too, and if we do you can bet you'll know of it before we get here, for there will certainly be some shooting done. Jim, look out for the redskin."

The last was said in a low tone of voice, for the boy thought that, after all, his suspicions might not be well founded, and he did not want Big Wolf to hear. The next minute the three were riding out from among the rocks. Striking the desert, they were soon going along at a gallop, dodging the sand-hills, so to speak, for it was impossible to proceed in a direct course. The moon was just rising, and as it shed its mellow light over the sand-hill region, some of the piles assumed a grotesque appearance, which might have caused a stranger in that part of the land to halt and take in the scene. But not so with Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and Hop Wah. It was not the first time by any means that they had been among the sand-hills of that region. They proceeded on, Wild and Charlie carefully judging the distance as they went, and as they came near to the end of

the sandy stretch and could see thorny vegetation and patches here and there, they knew were getting close to the place where the Apaches were camped. Certainly Big Wolf could have gained nothing by lying about the distance. Up a rather long hill they rode, and then they found themselves riding between trees of a semi-tropical nature. At the top of the hill they paused, for they suddenly saw a light that came from a number of fires a short distance to the left.

"There she is, Wild!" the scout exclaimed, in a low tone of voice. "That's the Injun camp right over there. Big Wolf didn't lie about it, did he?"

"No, he didn't, Charlie. But he had no cerge to tell a lie about it, as far as I can see. Now then, I reckon we had better go on a little further at a walk, and then we'll leave the horses and creep up and spy on them. I reckon we ought to get close enough to pick up enough to let us know what they intend to do. We both understand enough of the Apache lingo for that."

"We'll find out all right," the scout answered.

When they got to within a couple of hundred yards of the camp, which could not yet be seen, owing to the fact that it lay in a hollow, the three halted and dismounted. The horses were tied among some shrubbery, and then Wild beckoned for his companions to follow him. Making their way noiselessly along, they soon reached a point from which they could look down into the hollow. When they saw so many of the redskins, Wild and Charlie realized that Big Wolf had not lied when he told of their numbers. They looked them over carefully as well as they could, and then suddenly the young deadshot caught sight of the one white man among them. It happened that the redskin hunters were skinning the game they had shot, and as some of them moved away, Bug Houseman was disclosed sitting on the ground. There was no mistaking as to what he was, for the light of the fire fell full upon him.

"Charlie," the young deadshot whispered, "I reckon the redskins have got a white man to lead them."

"The measly coyote!" Charlie exclaimed, his eyes flashing. "That's about the last thing a white man kin do, take command of a gang of bad redskins. Wild, he's a blame sight worse than the worst Injun there. I feel jest like puttin' a bullet through his heart."

"Well, don't do it if you do feel that way, Charlie."

"Oh, you know I wouldn't do it unless it had to be done. But that's the way I feel, jest the same."

While they were watching and conversing in whispers, Hop Wah slipped away from them, moving off to the left. When they returned to look for him a couple of minutes later he had become lost to view, for there were so many bushes there that it was easy for him to dodge along among them.

"That heathen is goin' to git into trouble as sure as anything," Cheyenne Charlie whispered. "He's sneaked off now most likely to put up some job on the redskins."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there came the sounds made by falling dirt and stones less than twenty feet from them. Then a yell went up from a couple of redskins who were close to the spot unknown to our two friends.

This was followed by a combined yell, and then they heard Hop call out for help. Charlie was about to respond, when the young deadshot caught him by the arm and pulled him back.

"Easy!" was the command. "They have got him, and the whole gang is running this way. The best thing we can do is to hide ourselves and trust to luck. This way."

Back the two went toward the horses and, reaching them, they led them around behind some rocks, and then with their revolvers in their hands waited.

CHAPTER VII.—Hop's Easy Escape.

Hop Wah had no intention of doing anything that would attract the attention of the Indians when he slipped away from Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie. He was just a bit curious, and wanted to get a better look at them than he thought he might have if he remained with the two. But unfortunately for him he had not gone more than a dozen feet when he found himself right at the edge of a sloping bank. A thick growth of low bushes grew along the top of the bank, so he got there before he was aware of it. Everything would have been all right if a portion of the earth had not caved away beneath the weight of his feet. In trying to catch himself, the Chinaman caused more of the earth to give away, and then down he went for a distance of ten feet.

As luck would have it, the two Indians who were no doubt doing guard duty, happened to be within a dozen yards of the spot. Hearing the sounds made by the falling Chinaman and the dirt that came with him they ran out of a small group of trees and got to him before he had a chance to get upon his feet. Then it was that the yells of alarm sounded, and as Hop was seized and saw more Indians rushing that way, he uttered his cry for help. He fully expected that Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie would open fire upon the redskins.

But when he found they did not, he did not get a bit more frightened, for so many times had he been placed in a similar position that it was really an old thing to him, so to speak. But he made out that he was nearly frightened to death, however, and this caused the Indians to be less careful with him than they might have been if he had put up a fight to get away. With the yelling crowd of redskins he was half dragged into the camp, and when he was pulled before the villainous white man who was the leader of the band, Hop really was fairly at his ease, though to look at him just then one would have thought that he was ready to drop from sheer fright.

"Whattée mattee?" he asked, looking at Bug Houseman and trembling more than ever. "Me allee samee goodee Chinee."

"Huh!" the villain exclaimed, sneeringly. "You're a good Chinee, are you? Well, jest let me know what you're doin' around here, then?"

"Me comee to find redskins. Big Wolf tellee me comee. He say redskins no hurttee me."

At this the leader of the Apache band broke into a laugh. Somehow he regarded what the Chinaman said as being very comical.

"Say," he said, turning to Dog, and then he

laughed more than ever, "what do you think of that? Big Wolf sent him over here an' told him that nobody would hurt him. That's putty good, ain't it?"

"Big Wolf heap much smart," Dog answered, with a nod of his head. "Maybe paleface come with the Chinees."

"That's so. Maybe he wasn't alone. Was any one else with you, heathen?"

Hop shook his head.

"Me comee allee 'lone," he declared. "Bigees Wolf wantee me comee and telle ledskins something. Me comee here, but me allee samee faller down um bank. Ledskins makee poor Chinees velly muchee 'flaid, so be."

The quick-witted Chinaman was certainly doing nicely now. He had spoken at hazard, but felt quite equal to the task, for his cleverness would surely enable him to tell some sort of a story.

"You're sure you came alone, eh?" Bug asked, as he showed Hop his revolver.

"No shootee!" the Chinaman exclaimed, and then his knees fairly knocked together. "Me tellee you me comee allee samee alone. Me goodee Chinees. No tellee lie. Me go to Sunday-school in 'Flisco, and me no forgittee."

"Fellers," Bug said, turning to the redskins who were so thickly gathered about him, "he says he's a good Chinees, an' that he went to Sunday-school in 'Frisco. That's putty good, ain't it?"

Several of the Apaches grunted approval.

"Most likely he's tellin' the truth, though," went on Bug, with a satisfied nod. "But jest the same you fellers oughter see to it that there's a watch kept. Where's your horse, heathen?"

"Me no gottee horse," Hop declared. "Me no wantee anybody knowee me comee, so me walk."

"Walked about three miles, then, I reckon."

"Velly muchee bigee walk."

"I reckon so, most of it being through the sand. But it wasn't so bad, 'cause it's in the night now, an' there's a little breeze blowin'. Made you sweat a little, though, I s'pose, didn't it, heathen?"

"Allee samee velly muchee sweatee," Hop declared, and then he pulled from under his coat the big yellow handkerchief he always carried with him and mopped his brow.

"Dog," Houseman said, turning to the Indian he seemed to regard as a sort of lieutenant in the absence of Big Wolf, "jest go around an' make sure that the heathen hasn't been lyin' to us. If there's a horse anywhere around it must be his, an' that will mean that he's been tellin' us a string of lies."

The redskin nodded and promptly started off through the darkness.

"Set down, heathen," Bug said, in a patronizing sort of way. "I've met a whole lot of heathens in my time, an' you don't look much different from any of 'em. But I do think I never seen one any more scared than you was when they fetched you here before me."

"Me 'flaid ledskins allee samee killee me," Hop answered, and then he acted as if he was trying to feel at ease.

But Hop was a good actor, and no doubt he could have made a big living if he were to go on the stage. It was easy enough to deceive Bug Houseman and the Indians, anyhow, though the

majority of the latter were bound to be suspicious.

"What did Big Wolf send you here for, anyhow?" Bug asked, after he had talked a minute or two with some of the redskins, who kept asking him questions.

"Big Wolf say velly nicee Melican man here, and he tellee me to takee some tanglefoot to him."

"What! He sent some whisky over to me, then?"

Bug arose to his feet and looked eagerly at the Chinaman.

"Lat light."

"Let me see the whisky an' then maybe I'll believe you."

Hop quickly slipped his hand under the loose-fitting coat he wore and drew out a pint flask.

"Velly goodee tanglefoot," he declared.

The Indians crowded closer, for it seemed to be their nature to like strong drink, and as Bug removed the cork from the flask and took a smell, they crowded him so close that he was forced to step back.

"Hold on, boys," he said, half angrily. "Don't try to trip me up jest 'cause I've got a bottle of whisky. It's mine, you know. There ain't a taste for all hands, that's sartin, so there ain't no use of givin' only a few a little of it. I'll call up them as I want to drink. Now then, git back an' keep out of the way. I'm goin' to sample this here stuff, an' if it's good, as the heathen says it is, everything is all right."

Rather reluctantly the Apaches dropped back a little. Then Bug braced himself against a tree as if he needed a support while taking a drink of the liquor. Up went the flask to his lips, and then the silence was so great that the gurgling sounds could be heard as it went down his throat. The villain did not take the flask from his lips until he had swallowed about half the contents. Then with a sigh of relief he put the cork back and slipped the flask in his shirt-front. Hoarse mutterings went up from those about him, but Bug did not seem to mind it in the least.

"Velly goodee tanglefoot," Hop ventured, as he stepped over a little closer to the white man.

"Putty good stuff, heathen, that's right. Now then, tell me what Big Wolf said when he sent you over to give me the whisky."

"He say maybe you wantee lillee dlink. He comee pletty soonee when he allee samee gittee um chance."

"Oh, he's comin' over, too, eh?"

"Lat light. He tellee me lat maybe um ledskins wantee killee evelybody in um camp, so me bettee gittee 'way. Bigee Wolf velly muchee fliend of poor Chinees."

"I understand, heathen," and Bug nodded just as if he no longer had the least doubt as to the sincerity of the Chinaman.

"Injuns," he said, turning to the Apaches, "I know all about it now. Big Wolf made friends with the heathen an' he thought enough of him to send him away so he wouldn't be killed an' scalped when we go over there an' clean that gang out."

Most of them understood him, and those who did not, quickly learned it from the others, so one and all seemed to feel satisfied, since Big Wolf was a sort of chief among them and was looked upon as their leader. A couple of minutes later

Dog came back. It was evident that he had not taken the trouble to go very far away from the camp in his search, for he reported that no horse was to be found and that everything seemed to be all right.

"Good!" Bug exclaimed. "That means that the Chinees told the truth. But I've been satisfied to that right along. Big Wolf got hold of a pint of whisky in some way, an' he sent him over to give it to me. What do you think of that, Dog?"

"Ugh!" the Indian answered, eagerly. "Fire-water?"

"Yes, and I've saved some for you. There wasn't enough for everybody, so I took a good drink of it myself, an' now I'm goin' to take another drink, an' then you kin have what's left."

Dog was delighted, and when the villainous white man produced the flask and applied it to his lips, he stood with outstretched hands waiting for his chance at it. This time Bug only took a couple of swallows. He handed the flask to the Indian, who was not long in emptying it. Then he tossed the flask upon the ground, and there was a scramble for it. The Indian who was lucky enough to git it tried to get a drop or two from it, and then he passed it around among the rest, so they might have a smell. This was really amusing to Hop, for he was now in quite an easy frame of mind, and had not the least doubt that he would be able to escape without the assistance of Wild or Charlie.

"Heathen," Bug said, after a while, "how did Big Wolf manage to git the whisky?"

"Cheyenne Charlie havee um tanglefoot. He allee samee dlinkee velly muchee. He likee gittee dlunk."

Then the Chinaman grinned and chuckled softly to himself, for he knew pretty well that the scout was listening, and he regarded it as a joke on him.

"Who's Cheyenne Charlie?" Bug demanded.

"He allee samee Young Wild West's partner."

"Young Wild West, eh? You don't mean to say that he's over there in the camp among the rocks?"

"Lat light. Young Wild West shootee velly muchee stlaight. He wantee shootee off my pigeetail, and me no likee."

Houseman appeared quite concerned for a minute or two. Evidently he had heard of Young Wild West and knew what he was capable of doing. But since Big Wolf had not mentioned the young deadshot's name during the brief conversation they had that afternoon, he had not figured on meeting with such a reception as he now felt would surely be the case. But the fact was that Big Wolf did not seem to regard Young Wild West as being anything greater than any other American boy, and that was no doubt the reason why he had not mentioned his name. Some of the redskins knew of Young Wild West, it appeared, for they came up close and began asking Hop a number of questions concerning the young deadshot. The clever Chinees was quite equal to the occasion, and he told them about everything the boy could do, and much that he could not do. But he kept declaring occasionally that he had no use for Young Wild West or any of his friends, and that he was glad to get away from them, since

they treated him badly and made him work very hard for small wages. He laid great stress upon Cheyenne Charlie, declaring that he was a very bad man, and that he had a way of shooting or hanging all the Indians he came across; also that when he got good and full of whisky he would shoot squaws and papooses. The fun-loving Chinees seemed to have almost forgotten that he was in reality a prisoner, and he was piling it on to the scout good and hard, and enjoying it as he did so.

"Well, fellers," Bug said, when the Chinaman had about concluded his remarks in answer to the queries that were put to him by the redskins, "it don't make no difference whether it's Young Wild West or who it is. We're goin' to wait here till midnight, an' then we'll sneak over there, keepin' behind the sand-hills till we git to the rocks, an' it won't take many minutes to clean out the pale-faces. The gold will be divided up by me when we git it, an' you fellers kin have all the scalps you want."

"Heap much gold?" Dog asked, looking at the Chinaman inquiringly.

"Velly muchee," Hop declared, and then he held up both hands and made motions to indicate that there was a pile of it at least four feet in height.

"Did you see it, heathen?" Bug asked.

"Me see plenty gold. Young Wild West and um plospectors no gottee horses to takee 'way. Ley wantee gittee some bad ledskins' ponies."

"Oh, they want to get some of our ponies, do they? What are they thinkin' about?"

"Young Wild West say when you comee to fightee he velly soonee gittee plenty horses. He shootee you velly muchee quickee."

"He will, eh? Well, I sorter reckon not, and Bug meant this when he said it, for he now felt more determined than ever to keep well out of the way when the attack was made.

"Me wantee stay with you, Misler Melican man," Hoy said, after a pause. "But me no wantee fightee. Me velly goodee cookee. Makee evelythling nicee for you."

"All right, heathen. You kin stay with us, an' I'll see to it that you git used right, too.. Blamed if I don't like you for havin' brought that whisky to me. I'm gittin' so I'm feelin' bully jest now, an' I think if Young Wild West was to happen along at this minute I'd step out an' shoot it out with him."

"You velly smartee Melican man. Maybe you killee Young Wild West velly muchee quickee."

Then Hop looked around and, finding a good seat close to the trunk of a truck, he squatted down and calmly drew a cigar from his pocket and lighted it. Nearly all the Indians belonging to the band had gathered thickly about the spot, for the capture of the Chinaman had created considerable excitement, and their interest had been held ever since it happened. Hop knew it was about time for him to get away, so after taking a few puffs at his cigar, he drew another from his pocket and tendered it to Bug, who promptly accepted it.

"Maybe you likee smokee," Hop said.

"I sartinly do, heathen. I'll light up right away."

As there was a heavy charge of gunpowder in the cigar, Hop decided that he had better get away

before it exploded. While Bug was lighting the cigar the clever Chinese slipped a big firecracker from one of his pockets and then quietly tossed it into the fire that was but a few feet from him. He settled back against the tree again, as if he meant to take things easy, but really he was making ready for a spring. It was not more than ten seconds before the cracker exploded with a report almost as loud as a field piece, scattering the embers of the fire in every direction and causing a panic among the redskins. The very instant the report rang out the Chinaman was upon his feet and speeding away. Half a dozen of the Indians were bowled over in his flight, but he got away with the greatest of ease and made straight for the place where Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie had been when he left them.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Siege Begins.

Young Wild West and Charlie had managed to hide while the villain was searching for Hop's horse. When the redskin, called Dog, went back to his gang our two friends crept near the place where they were encamped. They got there just in time to hear Hop telling his long, quickly-made-up story. Charlie was angry at the way the Chinaman told about his killing Indian women and babies. But Wild told him Hop was only fooling the villains. But when they saw Hop throw the firecracker in the flames they jumped up and ran for their horses. When they reached there the Chinaman was right in back of them. They rode back to camp to find things just as they had left them. Big Wolf looked at them inquiringly, but said nothing.

To have seen Young Wild West and his friends at the camp among the rocks no one would have suspected that they knew for a certainty that there was to be an attack made upon them by a band of nearly a hundred rascally Indians. They chatted and laughed until it was nearly ten o'clock, and then Wild told the girls they had better retire to the tent and get a little sleep.

"You're likely to be aroused around midnight, you know," he added with a laugh. "The chances are about that time bullets will be flying about here as thick as hail."

"And some will be flying in another direction, too, Wild," Arietta answered. "I mean to see to it that some will go from my rifle, and I expect them to find Indians for targets."

"That's all right, little girl. But you can get a couple of hours' sleep if you try good and hard, so I'll bid you good-night."

"Good-night, Wild. Good-night, all hands," and so saying, the girl promptly entered the smaller of the two tents, which was the one that was always occupied by the female members of the party. Once the girls had retired, the rest talked in low voices so as not to disturb them. Wild gave his orders as coolly as if it was merely a farce that was to be enacted. He told the three prospectors to lie down and go to sleep just as if they knew everything was all right. But this they did not want to do, and finally Buckley was directed to remain on the watch with the young deadshot and his partners.

Wild did not think it would be advisable to let only one or two guards do duty, for it was possible that Bug Houseman might change his plans and come a little earlier. Stationing themselves where they could keep a sharp watch over the moonlit sand, the four waited patiently. Hop and Wing had turned in, the former to get an hour or two of sleep before the excitement began, and the other because he was always ready to sleep, anyhow, especially after the sun set. The minutes flitted by, and at length an hour had passed. Then the moon showed signs of soon disappearing, and once this happened it would be quite dark among the sand-hills. Wild knew this, and he judged that the redskins were waiting until the moon was gone, so they would have a better chance of creeping up to the rocky place in the desert. At length the young deadshot looked at his watch and found it was five minutes after twelve. There were no signs of the redskins yet.

But this did not make him think for an instant that they were not very close at hand. There were so many hills of sand about the camp that it would be easy for them to creep up unobserved. The only light now was that which came from the twinkling stars overhead, and the sand-hills loomed up strange and grotesque in appearance. The boy sat on a rock with his rifle across his knees, and he kept looking from the right to the left, now thoroughly awake and ready to begin operations at an instant's notice. Jim Dart was stationed about ten feet from him. He was standing with his side against a wall of rock, and close to him was Buckley. Charlie was around to the other side, but he could be distinctly seen by the rest. The scout was lying upon the top of a flat rock, almost full upon his stomach, and his rifle was thrust out ready to send out the death-dealing bullets. Perhaps twenty minutes passed, and then the watchful scout saw a moving form less than fifty feet from him.

It came from behind a big sand-hill, and without saying a word to his companions, he kept watching, and when another appeared, and still another, he knew that the time had arrived when something must be done. Charlie was not the sort of man to wait for an Indian to shoot first. He hated the whole race since his parents had been slain by Indians when he was a little child too young to remember how they looked. Placing his rifle so it was on a line with the foremost of the creeping figures, he took a quick aim and pulled the trigger. Crang! The sharp report broke the stillness of the night with a distinctness that was startling. Instantly every one in the camp was awake, and before the death cry of the redskins had died out they were ready for action. A terrific yell followed probably four seconds after the scout's shot rang out, and then from behind the sand-hills what seemed to be the full force that was commanded by Bug Houseman made a rush for the rocks, firing as they came. Young Wild West and his companions immediately got down from their dangerous positions, and then they all began shooting, the boy and his partners making sure that every bullet hit the mark. Arietta, Anna and Eloise joined in, for they easily found crevices and holes from which to shoot at the advancing Indians. As many as thirty shots must have been

fired by those in the camp, while probably the Indians discharged as many as a hundred. Then there was nothing alive to shoot at, so the shooting stopped, and the thick smoke which had gathered slowly arose and shut off the stars like a huge cloud for the time being.

"Well, I reckon they got a little more than they expected boys," Young Wild West said, in his cool and easy way. "You can bet that they won't try that again to-night. Such a reception is bound to have its effect, even on a gang of villainous redskins. They want our scalps, do they? Well, it seems to me that they are a long way from getting them. And as far as the gold dust is concerned, I hardly think they will get close enough to lay hands upon it. But I would just like to catch sight of that white scoundrel who is bossing this job."

"It wouldn't do you much good to see him, Wild, if I was to see him first," Cheyenne Charlie spoke up. "My finger is itchin' to pull a trigger on him."

"The chances are that he was too clever to come close enough to get shot," Arietta said, with a shake of the head. "He is bossing that job, and probably has kept well in the rear."

When the smoke finally cleared away they peered out upon the scene and could see the silent forms of the redskins that had perished lying here and there. But not a moving thing came within the range of their vision. Of course, there must have been plenty of live ones behind the sand-hills, but they did not see fit to show themselves.

"It's remarkable, I call it," Buckley said, as he crept over to where the young deadshot was sitting. "Jest think of it, all the shots they fired an' not a bullet came anywhere near us."

"Their bullets couldn't very well hit us, unless they happened to come right through one of those openings we have been shooting through," Wild answered. "They have flattened a whole lot of lead against the rocks, that's all."

"Do you think they'll give it up now?"

"No, they won't give it up. They'll hold us here as long as they can. A redskin only gets all the worse when he loses some of his companions. But they won't shoot in the open again, not very soon, anyhow."

The boy was right in this, for the long night passed and not the least sign of a live Indian could any of them see. The girls went back to the tent, but it was little or no sleep they got, and probably the only inmate of the camp who did sleep was Wing, the cook. The first sign of the approaching day was welcomed by all, for even though it brought no advantage to them, they would all feel better when they could see things distinctly. Gradually the gray dawn spread in the eastern sky, and then a patch of yellow showed itself above some sand-hills in the distance. This was followed by a glow of purple, which widened into a hue that was almost crimson, and then the yellow predominated and gradually spread across the whole stretch from the north to the south.

"The old feller is goin' to rise like a ball of fire pretty soon," Cheyenne Charlie remarked, for he had stood facing the East. "He's come up an' after two hours he'll be so blamed hot that things will begin sizzlin' on the sand ag'in. It won't take

more than half a day afore the carrasses what's what's layin' on the sand out there will begin to spoil. That won't make it very pleasant for us, if we've got to stay here very long."

"A few shovelfuls of sand over each of them will settle that part of it, Charlie," Young Wild West answered, coolly.

"Yes, but that will give the sneakin' coyotes a chance to shoot at us from behind the sand-hills."

"I am going out to do a little scouting presently. 'I just want to see if they are close by,'" said Wild.

"You're not goin' to leave here, are you?" Buckley asked, in surprise.

"I certainly am," came the reply. "I am going before breakfast, too. I am going to make a complete circuit of this place, Indians or no Indians."

"Dangerous business, Young Wild West," and the man shook his head.

"You might call it dangerous. But I have got a fleet horse, and I mean to take my rifle with me. I can shoot as well while I am riding at full speed as they can standing still, so that part makes it even."

"Yes, but there's a whole lot of them, an' you're only one."

"That's all right. They won't all get a chance to shoot at me, so don't think that."

Wild waited until the sun had shown itself in full, and then saddling Spitfire, his sorrel stallion, he coolly mounted and took the rifle that Arietta had been waiting to hand to him.

"Be careful, Wild," she said, and he smilingly assured her that he would.

Then out of the rocks he rode, his horse at a trot, for it mattered not to him if the Indians were close enough to hear the hoof-beats. What he wanted to do was to find out where they were, and if this did it, it would save him the trouble of exposing himself. But they all watched, and no Indians showed themselves. Wild rode straight out in a direction that was exactly opposite to that from which the attack had been made during the night. He went a full mile, and then turning to the left, started in a circle. Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart took positions, their rifles ready to shoot at long range. Wild got nearly half way around when he suddenly came in sight of the Indians.

They were camped behind half a dozen sand-hills, which happened to be so placed that others lying between made it impossible for those among the rocks to see them. The hoof-beats of the horses were not loud enough to attract the attention of the redskins, so it was not until some of them saw him that any particular notice was taken of him. The boy had his rifle to his shoulder, with Spitfire galloping along, the reins lying upon his neck. Wild was probably five hundred yards from them, but this made no difference. He knew he could pick off a redskin at that distance without any trouble, and if he were to fire at a bunch of them he would be sure to get one. The sight of the boy riding along in such a fearless way excited the Apaches, and some of them ran for their horses and quickly mounted to give pursuit. Then one of them fired a shot. That was sufficient. Young Wild West's rifle spoke in answer, and the redskin threw up his hands and

dropped. But this caused them to lose some of their caution, and nearly the entire band mounted and gave pursuit.

Wild fired half a dozen shots at them, and then seizing the reins, urged the sorrel to a faster pace, keeping in the semi-circle, however. It was but a minute or two before the redskins came in view of those at the camp. Then rifles began cracking quickly, and nearly every bullet either hit a redskin or a horse. But that settled it as far as the pursuit was concerned. Back they went to the cover of the sand-hills, and Wild slackened the pace of his horse and rode leisurely on until he got back to the camp.

"Well, I reckon we know where they are now," he said, in his cool and easy way. "It wasn't so dangerous, after all, was it, Buckley?"

"It looked mighty dangerous to me," was the reply. "But you're different from the rest of us. You ain't afraid of nothin'. How many Injuns went down, do you think?"

"Oh, perhaps a dozen of them. I think there were barely as many as that to fall."

"And more than that fell last night. We've cut their number down whole lot," Jim Dart declared.

"We'll cut 'em down if they'll only stay around her long enough, an' you kin bet on that!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed, a grim smile showing on his tanned and weather-beaten face.

As the sun rose higher, Cheyenne Charlie became very restless. He again called the attention of Wild to the bodies of the Indians that were lying so close to the camp.

"Don't you think we had better go out an' bury 'em?" he said.

"You will be taking chances if you do. But I suppose it will be all right. Get the prospectors to help you, and each take a shovel. Jim and I will climb upon the high rock up there and keep an eye for the redskins if they see you and open fire on you."

Charlie gave a nod of satisfaction, and then he proceeded to tell the prospectors what he wanted them to do. The result was that five minutes later the four climbed over the rocks on the side where the dead redskins were lying, and fearlessly walked up to them. It was easy digging, and one by one the bodies were covered with sand until only two remained. Then a rifle shot rang out and a bullet whizzed past Buckley's ear. He instantly dropped his shovel and started to run, showing that he had no liking for anything like that. Crang! Jim Dart's rifle spoke, and then Cheyenne Charlie took off his hat and waved it defiantly in the direction the first shot had been fired from.

"Did you git him, Jim?" he shouted.

"I reckon I did," was the reply.

"Good enough. Now then, jest watch 'em. I'm goin' to see to it that this work is finished."

Buckley came back looking somewhat ashamed of himself, and assisted in burying the other two bodies. No more shots were fired, for no doubt the Indians knew they would get the worst of it if they tried it again. Satisfied at what had been accomplished Cheyenne Charlie led the way back to the rocks. He went and got a drink of water from the trickling stream, and as he handed the cup to one of the prospectors, he gave a nod and said:

"I reckon it ain't everybody what has sich good cold water as that to drink when they're standin' a siege. You can't call this anything else but a siege," he went on, shaking his head and looking serious. "Them redskins is hidin' behind the sand-hills waitin' for us to leave here, an' it don't make no difference which way we go, they'll be right after us. As they outnumber us so much, they might be able to pop some of us over afore we git 'em all."

The forenoon passed without anything further happening. The prospectors had been working hard all the morning, and when Young Wild West went over to examine the hole they had been taking the pay-dirt from while the dinner was getting ready, he saw that it was about exhausted.

"Not so much there, after all, eh, boys?" he said.

"There's enough, though," Henderson declared. "I reckon we've got about all we kin carry, an' more, too."

"Are you washing it out carefully?"

"Oh, yes."

"That's right. There's no need of carrying along a lot of worthless dirt. That stuff will assay at a big per cent. and I know it. You ought to get a few thousand apiece out of it."

"There may be more of it around here what ain't been found yet," Reid suggested.

"Probably there is. But I hardly think it worth while to try and locate it just now. We have got

CHAPTER IX.—The Redskin Traitor Receives His Reward.

After breakfast had been eaten, Young Wild West went over to where the three prospectors were starting to work.

"That's right, boys," he said, smiling cheerily at them. "Keep right on and get the gold dust. We may have to stay here a day or two, perhaps, by the way things look. If the redskins decide to wait behind the sand-hills until we come out of here, I suppose it will be a siege. We'll put up with it as long as we can, and then after we have managed to thin them out pretty well we'll make a break to get away from here. How are you fixed for grub, anyhow?"

Buckley at once left the pocket, and led the boy a few yards distant, where all they had in the way of supplies were heaped.

"Not more than enough to last us a week, as far as far an' salt pork goes," he said. "There's a bag of hard crackers that might last a lot longer than that, so I reckon we're all right. We ain't goin' to starve, not if we have to stay here a week."

"I wouldn't think of such a thing as remaining here for a week," the young deadshot answered, with a smile. "While I know there are in the neighborhood of seventy-five savage Indians waiting to get at us, I couldn't stay here for any length of time. I'd have to get at them, you see."

"I reckon you know what's best to do," Buckley answered, looking at the boy in admiration. "What you done afore breakfast was enough to satisfy me that you ain't afraid of nothin' livin'."

"I'll do that same thing again before the day is over, unless they decide to make an attack on us and we can't clean them out."

these Indians on our hands, and the best thing we can do is to get out of the scrape. Then we'll all go to Tombstone, and if you fellows can manage to interest a few men and get them to come back here, it will be all right. I think I would do it if I were you."

"That's just what we'll do!" Buckley exclaimed. "Young Wild West's advice is the best kind of advice, boys."

A watch had been kept upon Big Wolf all the morning, but he had never showed the least inclination to leave the spot. As Wild turned back to where his partners were sitting with the girls waiting for the noonday meal to be ready, he noticed that the redskin seemed very sulky.

"What's the matter, Big Wolf?" he asked, as he paused and touched him on the shoulder.

"Me heap much sick," was the reply.

"Oh, I'll call Hop. Probably he can give you a dose that will fix you up."

The Apache shot an angry glance at the boy, but quickly lowered his head again.

"You don't like to stay here, I can see that," Wild remarked, as he stepped back a little and smiled. "Probably you are sorry you turned against your friends."

"Me no sorry."

"Oh, all right, then."

Wild did not mean to tell him that he knew all about his treachery until the proper time came, so he paid no further attention to him, and was soon eating dinner along with the rest. The meal had barely been finished when a combined yell sounded from the sand-hills that were close to them.

"By jingo!" the young deadshot exclaimed, "I reckon they are going to make an attack. Get ready, everybody."

Sure enough, the redskins had become tired of waiting, and under the advice of Bug Houseman they were going to try and take possession of the rocky stronghold. They suddenly appeared from behind the sand-hills, riding swiftly and yelling themselves hoarse as they brandished their weapons. There was only one thing to do, and Young Wild West knew exactly what it was.

"Steady now, everybody, and shoot to kill. That's our only salvation," he called out.

When they were within a hundred yards of the camp the approaching redskins opened fire. Then the brave defenders returned it, and horses and riders began dropping right and left. But it must have been that the Apaches were rendered desperate, for they kept on coming, and probably a dozen of them reached the rocks. The three prospectors were fighting as if they felt that their last chance to live had come. The girls kept on firing, neither of them missing a shot, while Hop and Wing stood by with cartridges so the magazines of the rifles might be filled as quickly as they were emptied. For ten minutes the firing kept up, and then the smoke was so thick that our friends knew that at least a few of the Indians were among the rocks right close to them. This meant that there was going to be a hand-to-hand fight, so they prepared themselves for it.

Suddenly there was a savage yell, and half a dozen of the Apaches leaped from behind the rock and dashed right at the brave defenders of the camp. As this happened, Big Wolf slipped away and got his horse. Young Wild West and his companions had all they could do just now, and none of them happened to see him. Away the

treacherous Indians rode, and once clear of the rocks, he swung around toward the sand-hills that lay between the besieged camp and the fertile ground beyond. He was looking for Bug Houseman, and as luck would have it he quickly found him, for the villainous white man was sitting on his horse behind one of the big hills of sand about two hundred yards from the rocks. Big Wolf uttered a yell of triumph and waved the carbine he had stolen from one of the prospectors while they were not looking over his head. It happened that a puff of wind blew the smoke aside, and Young Wild West caught sight of the Indian as he was just riding behind the sand-hill.

He was not sure it was Big Wolf, but a quick glance about him told him that the Indian was missing. The last one of the redskins who had succeeded in getting into the camp lay stretched upon the ground, so the boy felt that there was nothing to keep him there just then.

"The redskin traitor has got away," he called out. "Take care of things here. I am going after him."

Then the boy ran to the sorrel stallion and quickly saddled and bridled him. Mounting, he rode out through the smoke, which was now gradually disappearing, and swung around from the rear of the camp in the direction Big Wolf had taken. Wild turned a little to the right, for he knew about where he would be apt to find the traitor. After rounding two of the hills of sand he caught sight of him at a halt, while near him was the villainous white man who commanded the Apaches. The two were the only ones to be seen, so the boy let his horse walk along and got to within fifty yards of them without being seen. Then he dismounted and crept along, wishing to take them completely by surprise and make them prisoners.

Just then Bug Houseman dismounted, and then as Wild watched, Big Wolf did the same. This suited the boy better than ever, and when he saw them walk around one of the sand-hills as if to take a look at the besieged camp, the boy was after them with quickened steps. The shooting had died out now, for the victory had been about won. More than half the redskins had fallen, and those left were pretty well scattered. Wild glanced over his shoulder and saw several of the braves appearing over one of the sand-hills. They had seen him, so he decided to act quickly. A shout sounded just then, and he recognized the voice of Charlie and Jim, who had ventured from the rocks, no doubt to protect the young deadshot from the Indians they saw following him. The shout caused Bug Houseman and Big Wolf to turn and look around, and they saw Young Wild West within a few yards of them.

"Stop right where you are!" the boy called out.

Bug gave a violent start, and quickly turned his revolver upon the boy and fired point-blank at him. But the bullet missed him by a hair, and seeing that he was going to fire again, Wild let go at him and sent him rolling upon the ground with a well-directed shot. The redskin knew his treachery had been discovered, so he turned to flee. But he was hardly quick enough. Young Wild West leaped after him like a shot and caught him by the hair.

"No, you don't!" he exclaimed

Big Wolf fell heavily to the ground as the boy gave a mighty jerk. Crang, crang, crang! Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were firing upon the Indians now, and Wild knew everything was all right. More shooting sounded from the direction of the rocks, but he did not even try to look that way. He had seized one of the long braids of Big Wolf's hair, and with a quick move he wound it about his neck and then tied it to another so tightly that it almost strangled him.

"You treacherous hound!" the boy said, kicking him in the ribs. "I let you go without punishing you when I knew for a certainty that you had lied to us. Now then, you have got to take your medicine."

Big Wolf by a desperate effort scrambled to his feet and turned and ran directly toward Charlie and Jim, who were now walking to the scene, for they had settled accounts with the redskins who had started to pursue the young deadshot. The Indian had dropped his revolver, but he still had a hunting knife in his belt. He drew this and brandished it threateningly at the two before him. That was quite enough for Cheyenne Charlie. He quickly turned his rifle upon him, and as the report rang out the redskin traitor dropped to the sand and breathed his last.

"So you got the white skin, did you, Wild?" Charlie said, hardly paying any attention to Big Wolf.

"Yes. He was trying to get me, so I had to shoot him, Charlie," was the reply.

"Well, I'm goin' to propose three cheers. I reckon the siege in the sand-hills is over with. There ain't more than a dozen redskins left alive, an' they're ridin' so fast now that they're in danger of breakin' their necks."

Then the scout waved his hat and led in the cheer. Charlie and Jim had not taken time to mount their horses, but had left the camp on foot, so they quickly took possession of the steeds that had belonged to Bug and Big Wolf, and mounting them, they rode back, with Young Wild West in the lead. The three prospectors were jubilant at the way things had turned out, and when Young Wild West and his partners dismounted they ran up to them and insisted on hugging them to give vent to their feelings. Then there was more cheering, in which everybody joined, and for the next hour or two the gold was about forgotten. But toward the latter part of the afternoon Buckley and his pards again turned their attention to the work, and when night came they declared that they were satisfied with what they had taken, and wanted to get to Tombstone as quickly as possible.

Wild thought it advisable to remain right where they were during the night. The night following passed without anything happening, and then after breakfast the young deadshot and his partners made a search of the place with the prospectors, and two or three more spots that showed signs of being laden with gold dust were discovered and marked. All hands were satisfied to leave, so it was not very long before they set out. It is not necessary to dwell upon the journey to Tombstone, but suffice it to say that it was made without mishap, and once there the prospectors were not long in disposing of their gold dust, receiving a good amount of cash for the same.

They tried hard to make Young Wild West and

his friends accept something for the assistance they had rendered them, but that was not the way they did things. They were all pretty well fixed, anyhow, so Buckley and his pards were forced to be content, and they set about to organize a party to return to the desert and work the claim. Our friends never heard anything more of the Indian who had besieged them in the sand-hills, but they did not take pains to try, for such things were common, and they had plenty to think about for the time. Anyhow, it had been a lively time while it lasted.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST HOLDING A HERD; OR, ARIETTA'S FIERY RACE."

ROBERT MORRIS, FINANCIER

Not "burning for independence," like Samuel Adams, but a man of soberer judgment, cooler reason and equal love of freedom from tyranny, Robert Morris, "Financier of the Revolution," absented himself from his seat in Congress on July 1, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was submitted for approval.

Bob Morris (as he often signed himself) was a signer of the famous document, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of which will be celebrated by the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia this year, but he did not affix his name until August 2, when the engrossed Declaration was laid on the table to be signed.

For a long time he believed that the Colonies were not yet ready for independence, but his final signature was not inconsistent with his former hesitation, for much had happened in the brief month between the two dates. Such a signature as his leaves little doubt as to his sincerity—large, clear, steady and devoid of entangling flourish in its forthright march across the page.

Again and again did Robert Morris, with the gifts of a natural-born financier, come to the rescue of his country when money was the prime requisite of the moment. On his personal credit he borrowed a sufficient sum to enable Washington to finish his victory over the Hessians at Trenton, to be followed by his success at Princeton.

As a statesman he discharged his duties in a distinguished manner: three times a member of Congress; leader of the Pennsylvania delegation which signed the "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the States"; Superintendent of Finance; delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and first Senator from Pennsylvania to the First Congress of the United States under the Constitution.

A statue recently has been placed on the steps of the Custom House in Philadelphia. A tall figure bears in his hand a manuscript which represents the subscription list of Colonial business men who provided Washington's army with sufficient funds to gain the victory at Yorktown. The statue is as yet unveiled, but it bears the inscription: "Robert Morris, Patriot, Statesman, Financier."

THE BLACK HAND

By DICK ELLISON

A Serial Story

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued)

"Oh, I wish he would come!" she murmured. "He is very brave, but he does not know the terrible risk he is running. That I don't seem able to make him understand."

"He is one of the kind who gets there," replied Jack. "You must understand that."

"And don't I? He saved my life, all right. I shall never forget him. There is nothing in the world that I wouldn't do for Mr. Double-eyes to-night."

"What did they try to kill you for?" asked Jack, after another minute had passed.

"Because I knew too much. They were afraid I would go back on them, I suppose."

"And would you have done it?"

"It was all owing to you, Jack, if you must know. I betrayed you into their hands and then I was sorry for it. I pleaded for your life, and that nearly cost me my own."

"Was I brought here that night?"

"You were—to this very place."

"And it is here that I was taken into that room where I saw the Black Hand?"

"Yes. How frightened you must have been! If you will believe it, I felt for you then. I was working the magic-lantern which threw the reflection of the black hand upon that curtain—But here he comes. Heavens, what a noise he is making! What if they have captured him? What if it should be——"

But it was Old Double-eyes, all right. Just then he emerged from the door, backing out, holding a dark-lantern in one hand and a cocked revolver in the other. Following him was a man partially dressed and looking scared out of his wits. As the fellow caught sight of Mamie and Jack he gave a dismal yell and started back through the passage.

"Hold, you scoundrel!" cried the detective. "Come out or I fire!"

As he spoke he whistled, and the two men came hurrying up.

But their services were scarcely needed, except to take the fellow in charge. The man had dropped on his knees in the passage and was mumbling in Italian. It was a case of fright of the worst kind.

"Boys, take charge of him," said the detective. "The game isn't working out as I planned. This fellow is the only person in the house. Set him on his feet. Drag him inside. We will soon make him talk!"

The man was pretty roughly handled. Old Double-eyes' detectives got his knife away from him and stood him up against the wall.

"Come, now, you!" exclaimed the detective. "Talk or I'll blow your browns out. Where is everybody? Be quick!"

The answer was in Italian—plenty of words, but not one of them could be understood.

"What is he saying?" demanded the detective, turning to Mamie.

"He wants to know what you are going to do with him," said Mamie. "He says if you will let him off lightly, he will tell all you want to know."

"Tell him that if he will give us the right steer, he goes free to-morrow. Make him understand that all is known and that if I choose I can send him to the chair."

Mamie tackled the fellow again then and with such success that in a moment she was able to put the detective straight.

"They have gone body-snatching in Calvary Cemetery, Mr. Doubleday," she said. "He has told me just what part, too. I—I am rather familiar with the place. I can guide you there."

"Good!" exclaimed Old Double-eyes. "I don't doubt you have been there yourself, my dear. But never mind. We will cut that out. Does he say anything about you know who?"

"They are together," said Mamie, with a shudder. "It couldn't be a better chance, Mr. Double-eyes. Now is certainly your time, for they have only just gone, and if we are quick——"

"We can catch them red-handed. Good enough. Game is over here. Take the fellow along, boys—you know where, and just what to do."

The two detectives started off with their prisoner. But Old Double-eyes was forever springing his surprises.

"Come on, children!" he exclaimed, and he deliberately walked into the house.

"Aren't you going to the cemetery?" demanded Mamie in surprise.

"Not I," replied the detective. "Catch me breaking my neck tumbling around among the grave-stones, to say nothing of the risk of being shot. Why should the mountain go after the mouse when the mouse is sure to come to the mountain? This is the shop to do business in, and we stop right here."

CHAPTER XXIV.—Conclusion.

"This is the place! This is where they brought me, Mr. Doubleday. I recognize the room perfectly."

"Of course. I knew it," replied the detective. "Some one else shall know it in a few moments. We are going to work this racket to the queen's taste. If any one should happen to knock, you can call through the keyhole and ask what is wanted. If the answer is 'Barlow, the banker,' you might as well open the door and let them in."

It was no use asking for explanations. Jack had got through with that, so he took the lantern which Old Double-eyes handed over and returned downstairs. Old Double-eyes turned up his other lantern. The room was hung with white, just as Jack had seen it. There was the table and the big book, which proved to be only an old account book, by the way. There were also a number of chairs placed in a row, as though the room had recently been used for a meeting.

"Where is your lantern?" the detective asked the girl.

Mamie then showed him that the white screen

at the back did not go quite to the wall. Behind was a table upon which the magic-lantern stood.

"Good!" said Old Double-eyes. "Now, my dear, listen to me. If you're game for your part, success is sure. You say they will bring the body into this room?"

"They always do, Mr. Doubleday."

"Then you don't even have to show yourself. Get behind the curtain and start your lantern going. Be ready for business as soon as they are fairly in the room—see?"

Time passed. After a while footsteps were heard on the stairs.

"They are here," said Jack, entering. "But where is the girl?"

"She's all right. Tell 'em to come up."

Six men filed into the room. It began to look like business. All wore the uniforms of the New York police.

Then minutes later a wagon was heard to stop in front of the house. The room was now dark and as silent as the grave. Presently a door below opened and softly closed. Then the wagon drove away. Silence followed and it lasted for so long a time that Old Double-eyes began to think that his beautiful scheme was going to prove something of a failure, after all. The detective and Jack were crouching under the table then. In front hung a black cloth, which Old Double-eyes had unearthed in another room.

"Do you really think you will be able to work it if he does come? Will he sign that confession which you have drawn up?"

"And even if he don't—what then? With a resurrected corpse in the house, we have got them dead to rights; but hush! Some one is coming!"

Footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. They were heavy footsteps—it was evident that whoever was coming was staggering under a load. In a moment the door opened and two men, bearing a heavy sack between them, came staggering into the room, followed by a third. They dropped the sack on the floor. It fell with a thud, and some talk in Italian was being made when suddenly there was a flash of light and the black hand was thrown upon the white screen, the forefinger pointing to the word Death. At the same instant Jack Weldon rose from behind the table and stood motionless, his eyes fixed upon the wretch who had usurped his place, who, with his brother and their companion, stood transfixed.

"Merciful heaven! What is this—that boy!" the banker gasped.

"His ghost!" breathed Enrique, and all three turned for the door.

"Hold!" cried a voice behind them. "Touch that door and you die. The game is up, you robbers of the dead! Behold your warning, the Black Hand of Death! This time for you."

"The detective!" gasped the banker, as white as the hangings of the room. "Oh, why was I fool enough to join in this night's work?"

"Yes, the detective!" called Old Double-eyes. "Enrique Monelli, don't draw your revolver. Hal! You see the uselessness of it! We have you dead to rights!"

And indeed he had, for now from behind the screen four policemen stepped out and stood on either side. All were armed with revolvers, and Old Double-eyes had one himself. Downstairs

strange sounds were heard. There was a cry, a fall, then all was still.

"My men have got your friend, gentlemen," said the detective, coolly. "You who call yourself Barlow, the banker, just walk up to the captain's office and settle. Quick! Up to the table with you or I'll bore a hole right through your head!"

The "banker" staggered forward.

"Who is this boy?" demanded Old Double-eyes.

"He is Joseph Barlow; it is no use trying to hide it now!"

"Not a bit! Write your name here unless you want to change places with the body in that sack!"

It was only a coward Old Double-eyes had to deal with, after all. He seized the pen, wrote his name and then fell fainting to the floor. And with that fall ended the mystery of Barlow, the banker. For when they came to look at him they discovered that Pedro Monelli was as dead as the corpse in the bag. And Mamie, his discarded wife, whose death he had ordered, wept over his corpse. Such is the inconsistency of woman! There was no inconsistency about Old Double-eyes, however.

He had a tug ready to take his prisoners to New York, and on it they went, four living, one dead; the fourth man had been captured downstairs. The corpse was returned to Calvary, under charge of one of the policemen who remained behind. As for the rest, Old Double-eyes pronounced it dead easy. At ten o'clock that morning Jack Weldon turned up at Barlow's bank in company with the detectives and his late father's lawyers. There was none to dispute him, and Jack might have stepped into the usurper's place, but the lawyer thought otherwise. So the bank was closed and seals put upon everything. A week later, while all Wall Street was still talking about the Black Hand and the Barlow mystery, the true Joseph H. Barlow opened his bank.

As for the rest, Enrique Monelli and his two companions went to Sing Sing on twenty-year sentences. Torricelli, the detective got ten. Mamie Klein skipped out to New Orleans with a good fat roll and was never heard of again. Of course Old Double-eyes got his fat roll, too; just how much Jack gave him the detective would never tell. The remainder of the Black Hand men were never captured. Jack made Mr. Monroe his cashier, and between them they still run the bank and Jack is already a millionaire. Long since he has ceased to ponder over the events of the past. It is rumored that young Barlow, the banker, is about to marry a wealthy Fifth avenue girl, which goes to show that our hero has practically forgotten the days of the Black Hand.

The End.

ANOTHER NEW SERIAL COMING NEXT WEEK

The Title Is

FAST MAIL FRANK

THE BOY ENGINEER

Or, Railroading in the Wild West

By DICK ELLISON

It is a realistic story of the Rail. Read it.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

BOVINE OF BUTTER AS DAIRY AD AT SESQUI

It will be neither a Holstein cow nor a Guernsey cow, nor yet a Jersey cow, that will be the cow of cows at the dairy exhibit at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition, opening in Philadelphia on June 1. It will be a cow made of rich, sweet, tasting butter—a cow that boasts of weighing a ton—and all that of butter. Years ago, fifty to be exact, at the Centennial Exposition in 1876, there was also a butter-cow on exhibit, but as handsome as this cow? No. Not if the plans now being considered by members of the dairy industry are carried out, who are contemplating this novel method of advertising their product.

RUSSIAN GIANT SENTENCED

"You are too clever to be at liberty in this country," Judge William Allen in General Sessions said to Julius Kaufman, a Russian giant, as he sentenced him to from five to ten years in Sing Sing for forgery. The Russia, who is 30 years old and 6 feet 4 inches tall, came here in 1923. When released he will be deported.

Kaufman was employed by the late Joseph Breitbart, a wrestler, as his partner in a vaudeville act. When Breitbart died several months ago Kaufman assumed his name and traveled about giving exhibitions of wrestling. Kaufman forged certified drafts on the Bank of England for funds to furnish a night club in West Fifty-third Street. Specifically he defrauded the Central Mercantile Bank of New York out of \$2,000.

ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC OCEANS

The Arctic Ocean is the larger. As we are still ignorant of land and water in the polar regions, it is only possible to give approximate figures for the extent of the oceans, for the position of coast lines is not known exactly enough to exclude possible hundred thousand square miles in estimates of the total areas. Speaking generally, we may say with confidence that water predominates in the unexplored area around the North Pole, and that it is very likely that new land of any great extent exists there. On the other hand, recent Antarctic exploration makes it practically certain that a great continent surrounds the South Pole. Of this total area considerably more than Sir John Murray's estimate in 1894, when he assigned to it an area of 3,500,000 square miles. It is possible that the Antarctic continent measures about 5,000,000 square miles.

FINDS TOMBS OF 3000 B. C.

An important discovery has been made at Bahrein, one of the group of Aval Islands in the Persian Gulf near the coast of Arabia, by Doctor MacKay of the British School of Archaeology. It is a cemetery of the third millennium B. C. Sepulchral mounds seven miles from Manaweh, which have been excavated, have revealed burial chambers and cells containing decayed wooden pegs arranged as to suggest that the ward-robbers of the dead were hung there for use in after life.

The large tombs showed signs of having been robbed of valuable objects. The small tombs were intact. Pottery, ivory, shells, arrowheads, and spearheads were found in them, but there was no trace of gold or silver. An ivory statuette of a woman shows high artistic talent.

Doctor MacKay says it is not impossible that Bahrein was the island where the Sumerians originated.

TESTING ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

Five hundred white rats are being given intelligence tests to determine learning ability with respect to age in the Stanford University laboratories of psychology. The study is being financed by a man from the Carnegie Corporation of New York; \$12,000 to be extended over a period of three years. After the first year higher animals, such as the cat, will be studied.

The problem in the case of animals, according to Prof. Calvin P. Stone, who is conducting the experiments, is to test the ability to learn at successive stages of development. With rats, ages of 20, 30, 50, 100 and 200 days are used. Intermediate ages may be used later in further expansion of the work. Both the learning of new habits and the breaking of old ones are to be tested.

Two types of tests are being conducted by Professor Stone at present, the problem box and the maze. The problem box is a square box of wire screening from which a door leads to another box containing food. The door can be opened only by stepping upon a small platform projecting from the side of the box.

When the rat depresses this platform with his feet an electric current releases the door leading to the food. A rat is given this test once daily for twenty days and the time required for him to depress the platform is noted. Then a period of fifty days is allowed to elapse before the test is repeated to determine his retention of the habit formed. About 100 rats of each age are being tested.

The maze is one of the oldest devices used to test intelligence and learning ability. It consists of a labyrinthine passage containing many blind alleys, but only one direct path to the end, where food rewards the successful rat. A hungry animal is placed at the starting point and allowed to find his way to the exit. The number of false moves taken and the time required measure learning ability by this trial and error method. In addition to the 500 white rats now being used in these experiments, a breeding colony of about 100 animals is maintained.

A rough estimate of the relative rate of physical development in the rat and in man would be about 30 to 1. A rat one month old is equal in physical development to a child two and one-half years old. Results now at hand would seem to indicate that the ratio of mental development is probably more nearly to 50 to 1, according to Professor Stone.

Professor Stone began his present work June 1 and with one assistant worked seven hours daily during the summer. At present two research assistants are devoting four hours a day to the work.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

TWO BIRDS FROM ONE SHELL

Two canary birds from one egg is the trick of nature reported by Miss Addie L. Clark of Dallas, Tex. The mother bird started with three eggs, Miss Clark said. The bird broke one and she another, leaving the third egg, which produced two birdlings. The twins are normal and are among the best she has seen, Miss Clark said.

Twin birds are reported by bird fanciers to be very rare.

BURSTING STREET CAR AIRPIPE PINS CHICAGO WOMAN TO SEAT

Mrs. Adeline Slaick, twenty-four years old, was seriously injured when an airpipe, running beneath the flooring of a street car on which she was riding, suddenly burst, a section of the pipe being thrust through her body.

With one end of the pipe held fast in the woodwork of the seat, the woman was held prisoner until a fire department squad severed the pipe with an acetylene torch. Mrs. Slaick was taken to a hospital and specialists summoned to devise means of removing the pipe from her body.

LAST TRACES OF PARIS BASTILE

In the Place Bastille, with its famous column commemorating the storming of the fortress by the mob at the beginning of the French Revolution, was preserved the complete outline of the Bastille itself, exactly as it had stood in the Place and in the adjoining Rue St. Antoine. The site was marked with special paving stones that were put down in 1880.

Parisians are scrupulously careful of every little landmark of interest or beauty in their city, yet these special paving stones have almost disappeared as the result of frequent street mendings. Only a few remain. The Commission du Vieux Paris is now urging the authorities to restore the outline and all Paris hopes that they will agree to do so.

NEW 10-CENT STAMP FOR AIR MAIL IS OUT

A new air mail stamp of the value of 10 cents was placed on sale by the Post Office Department

February 15th. It is a new denomination in the airplane series, and has been issued primarily to pay the air mail postage for the various new contract routes which act as feeders to the main or trans-continental line.

The color of the new stamp is blue, similar to that of the special delivery stamp. It is the longest stamp ever issued by the department and is about half an inch in width. The central design is a map outlining the principal mountains and rivers of the country. There are two panels, one showing a mail air carrier traveling to the east and the other pointing westward.

The stamp was suggested to the department last October by an East Orange dealer who cited the necessity of a distinctive design so as to avoid confusion with the prevailing 8, 16 and 24 cent air mail stamps.

Advance sales of the new stamp were authorized in five postoffices, Chicago, Cleveland, Dearborn, Detroit and Washington. Several thousand copies were ordered in advance by New York dealers from the Philatelic Agency in Washington maintained by the Postoffice Department.

LAUGHS

"Do nuts grow on trees, father?" asked Charlie. "They do my son." "Well, on what tree does the doughnut grow?"

"So you got the opinions of two lawyers on the case. Were their opinions the same?" "Yes, \$25 each."

Woodchopper—"I seen a lot o' bear tracks 'bout a mile north o' here—big ones, too!" Hunter—"Good! Which way is south?"

Wife—"Wake up! There are thieves in the house." Husband—"Go down and show them your new bonnet and they won't waste any time looking for money."

She—"Didn't our honeymoon pass quickly, dearest?" He—"Well, I should say it did! Why, it seemed no time before I had spent all the money I had."

Miss Oldgirl—"Now, if I should find a man under my bed, I'd simply tell him to marry me or I'd shoot." Miss Petite—"Then you would simply be arrested for murder."

"I had a tough time delivering the mail yesterday," declared the postman. "How was that?" "Had a bulldog and a hunk of liver in the same delivery."

Wife—"That young man who calls on our daughter has me guessing." Husband—"How's that?" Wife—"I don't know whether he is economical or whether he has a grudge against the gas company."

"Why don't you raise something on that vacant lot—potatoes, for instance, or beans?" "I am raising good citizens," said the owner. "Don't you see those boys playing ball?"

The Passenger's Dog

Among the passengers of the ship *Indus*, bound from Calcutta to New York, was a quiet, blue-eyed girl of eighteen, named Ellen Sanders.

Her parents having recently died in the first-mentioned city, she was now on her way to the home of an elderly aunt, living in Boston, Mass.

The girl had no friend to take with her to America except Noble—her late father's favorite dog—which the captain of the vessel had permitted her to bring aboard his craft, to accompany her on the passage.

He had informed her, however, that if the animal proved in any way to be a nuisance to his other passengers, he would have to shoot it.

It was by no means a handsome dog.

It was large, with a strong, shaggy body, shaped like a lion's, but its head was too long and its tail too short for perfect proportion.

Nevertheless, Ellen was much attached to this faithful quadruped.

The poor girl, although she had but a little money left after paying for her passage, gave a certain sum every day to have the dog furnished with a good supply of food.

On clear, sunshiny days, she would bring her sewing on deck, and there she would sit for hours, quietly plying her needle, with Noble by her side.

The loss of her parents had cast a look of melancholy over her fair face, but when any of the other ladies spoke to her, she endeavored to brighten up and seem cheerful.

As the vessel widened the distance between it and the shores it had left, some of the passengers began to make complaints to the captain of the dog.

At night the latter would frequently howl in a mournful manner, as if, knowing it was being carried further and further every moment from the land where its master was buried, it was grieving on that account.

Ellen had never heard the dog go on in this way before.

She did everything in her power to quiet it, but in vain.

"I am afraid I'll have to have the animal shot," remarked the captain one day to his first officer—a fine-looking fellow of twenty-three, named Henry Harding.

"I would not do that, sir, if I were you," said Harding. "The young lady seems to be very fond of the dog."

"I know it, but I can think of no other way, except by killing it, to rid the ship of the nuisance. If it were only I who was annoyed I would not mind it, but I am bound, in the interest of my employers, to do all I can to promote the comfort of my passengers."

"Would its noise be heard by them distinctly enough to give them annoyance, if we put the dog at night in the hold?"

"We can try it."

The experiment was made, only to prove a failure.

The passengers still complained.

Noble continued his howls, except when the craft was near some island it was passing; then the creature would bark in a loud, vehement man-

ner, as if remonstrating because this was not the shore where its master lay.

Although the readiness with which it detected the presence of land was natural to its species, yet there was something truly remarkable about this quickness of perception on the part of the dog.

In the midst of fog and darkness combined the creature would seem to know when it was near any shore.

"I am sorry," said the captain one day to Ellen, "but I shall have to give orders for your Noble to be shot, on account of his disturbing my passengers."

It was a cloudy, foggy day, the wind blowing almost a gale, driving the vessel along at a swift rate.

For several days previously the skipper had been unable to take observations to determine his exact latitude, etc., but he judged he was some miles to the south of the Island of Timor.

All the passengers, except the girl, were now below in the cabin. Heedless of the spray that occasionally swept the deck, she had come up to look at the foam-covered waves, as they roared and hissed about the ship.

The captain's remark seemed to strike her like a ball from a musket.

She became pale, staggered against the bulwarks, for a moment, looked as if the dread announcement had been her own death sentence.

Then tears rushed to her eyes as she put an arm about the neck of her dog, which was by her side.

"You cannot mean it, sir?" she said, in a voice half-choked with grief. "Surely you will not take his life?"

"You will remember I told you, when you proposed bringing the animal abroad, that such would have to be the case if he proved to be a nuisance," said the captain.

"Yes, yes, I remember," replied Ellen. "But Noble had always been so quiet a dog that I did not think there was the slightest danger of his disturbing anyone. I beseech you not to kill him, sir. He was my father's favorite," she added, in faltering voice, "and I would rather have you put me and Noble ashore somewhere than take the creature from me."

"I would not, of course, do that," answered the skipper; "that is, I would not put you and your dog ashore," he continued, seeing her eyes light up as if she misunderstood him. "But the animal must be shot!"

Henry Harding stepped up to the skipper, respectfully raising his cap to the young girl.

"I do not think, sir, if we should speak to the other passengers, and give them all the facts about Miss Sanders' dog, they would be willing to have the creature shot on their account. I am sure they would put up with a thousand annoyances from it rather than deprive the young lady of a creature rendered doubly dear to her from its having been her father's favorite."

Ellen gave the speaker a grateful glance from her tear dimmed eyes, and he wondered how the captain could hold to his resolution before this gentle, suffering girl.

But the skipper was not to be moved from his purpose by a woman's distress.

Although he was by no means a stern man, yet

when believing that duty required it, as he did in this case, he could be as firm as a rock.

"Of course," said Ellen, "I do not want the other passengers annoyed. I, therefore, ask you to set me and Noble ashore, and——"

The captain waved his hand impatiently.

"That is out of the question," he declared. "I am responsible for the safe transportation of my passengers to their destination as quickly as possible. Waiving all other considerations, my changing my course to put you on some island—perhaps where there are pirates and murderers—would cause a serious delay."

Then the girl, her tears flowing fast, threw both arms about the dog's neck, and pressing her cheek against its head, endeavored in vain to stifle her sobs.

"Shall I speak to the passengers, sir, about the dog?" inquired Harding of the captain.

"No," replied the latter. "They would say they did not want me to shoot it, but there would be complaints of the annoyance when we reached home, and it would perhaps end in my being deprived of my command. But I will tell you what I want you to do. Go below, get my gun, and then come up and shoot the dog."

"No, sir, I will not do the deed!" answered Harding, firmly.

"You refuse? Are you aware, sir, that this is mutiny?"

"I don't think it could be called so. I did not ship to shoot down a young lady's dog."

"Refuse, and I will have to put you in irons. I repeat that your disobedience is mutiny!"

"I do not think so and, as I do not deserve it, I will not submit to be ironed."

"We will see about that," said the captain angrily. "But the first thing to do is to get the dog out of the way."

He walked amidships, and gave to the boatswain the same order Harding had refused to obey.

Although the boatswain—a Portuguese—at once went into the cabin, and brought up the captain's double-barreled gun, yet he was disinclined to shoot the dog.

Just as he came on deck with the weapon, the animal, suddenly pricking up its ears, bounded away from its fair owner, and ran forward.

The wind had now increased to a gale, and the ship was driven along with great velocity.

Rolling and pitching, her motions perhaps disturbed the boatswain's aim, or perhaps the gun was purposely pointed away when the skipper ordered the man to fire at Noble.

It is certain although the Portuguese was not ten paces from the creature when he discharged the piece that the bullet went wide of its mark.

"Walk up to him, and put the muzzle against his head," said the skipper. "That's the surest way."

The boatswain advanced towards the dog, while poor Ellen, overwhelmed with grief, now also ran towards it, as if to protect the creature with her own person.

This spectacle moved Harding beyond control.

He bounded forward in time to confront the boatswain ere he could reach Noble.

"This is too much!" cried the enraged captain.

He ordered his second and third mates to help him seize his disobedient officer and put him in irons.

Harding would have resisted, and a struggle must have ensued, but for Ellen, who now sprang between the young man and his opponents.

"No, no! there must be no trouble on my account," she cried. "Gentlemen, I beg you not to quarrel."

The captain gave his boatswain a significant look, which the man readily understood.

As the second and third mates were between him and Harding, and as the skipper now moved around to the other side of the disobedient officer, the boatswain had a good chance to go and shoot the dog ere he could be interfered with.

He hurried to the knight-heads, placed the muzzle of the gun against the dog's head, and was about to reluctantly pull the trigger, when it struck him that the animal was acting in a peculiar manner.

"Why don't you fire?" roared the skipper to the Portuguese.

As he spoke the dog barked still louder; then he placed his fore-paws on the spritsail-yard, thrust his nose far out, and commenced to whine mournfully.

"I think he smells land," said the boatswain.

The others had, in fact, by this time been led to the same conclusion by the dog's manner, as he always acted this way when near any port.

"Hard-a-port!" roared the captain to the man at the wheel. "Square yards, there!"

The boatswain took advantage of the excuse thus afforded him for at least delaying the shooting of the dog.

He put the gun aside, and ran to help work the ship.

The latter, with her yards squared, had scarcely fallen off, and forged along on her new course, when there was an exclamation of surprise and dismay from all the men at the fearful danger they had thus escaped.

Not fifteen fathoms from them they beheld what the thick mist had hitherto concealed, but which they were now near enough to see plainly—a line of low rugged rocks, which had previously borne directly ahead of the ship, and upon which she must have been hurled and shattered to pieces, but for the timely warning of the dog, Noble.

The warning had enabled the captain to keep off just in time to clear the extremity of the rugged reef, which his vessel passed at so short a distance that he fairly shuddered and turned pale to think of her narrow escape.

"You will not shoot my dog?" pleaded Ellen, anxiously.

"Shoot it? No! I would not kill your useful Noble for a million of dollars! He has saved my ship, and perhaps all our lives."

With a glad, thankful cry, the young girl ran to her dog and embraced it, while smiles like sunshine chased the tears from her eyes.

The passengers in the cabin, when they learned what had happened, remonstrated with the skipper for having, even for a moment, entertained the design of shooting Noble.

They complained no more of the noise made by the animal.

Ellen felt very grateful to Harding for his championship in her behalf.

In due time she became better acquainted with him, and, finally, at the house of her aunt, she consented to be the young officer's wife.

FROM EVERYWHERE

ACCUSED OF KILLING 53

A Warsaw dispatch tells of the arrest of a "Bluebeard" named Rutschuc, who is charged with killing fifty-three persons, mostly women and children, and including a priest named Majewski.

Rutschuc is alleged to have confessed that he lured his victims into the woods and killed them.

FARM POPULATION OF STATE DECLINED 10,000 LAST YEAR

Farm population in New York, including entire families, declined from 733,000 to 723,000 during 1925, according to figures made public by G. F. Warren of the New York State College of Agriculture. Mr. Warren drew his statistics from a survey of 4,384 farms.

During the year ending Feb. 1, 1926, about 30,000 men and boys left farming to take up other work and about 12,500 left other occupations to go to farming.

"At the present time," the report says, "there are only about 25,800 hired men on farms compared with 26,700 a year ago and with 77,000 in 1916. Farmers are more and more getting their work done by the use of mechanical power such as tractors, trucks, etc. and by exchanging work with their neighbors."

SEEK WEST INDIES HISTORY

H. E. Anthony, Curator of the Department of Mammals of the American Museum of Natural History, will sail for San Juan, Porto Rico, with a party of naturalists for an intensive study of the mammal life of the West Indies. The special objects of the study will be to discover facts about the ancient West Indian continent, of which the West Indian Islands appear to be surviving parts. The statement of the museum says:

"The West Indies have always been a fascinating field of study for zoologists, not only because of the interesting forms of life to be found there, but because of the problem of working out the ancient history of the islands themselves. There are just enough living forms on the islands to make one wonder how they ever arrived unless the islands were joined to the mainland."

TURKEYS MAY GO

An experimental turkey farm has been established at Glendale, in the dry region of Arizona, by the United States Department of Agriculture to stimulate interest in turkey raising. The industry has declined greatly in the last twenty-five years. Scientific production methods are to be developed on this farm, and studies made of the turkey disease known as "blackhead," a mysterious malady which wipes out entire flocks.

In the event of failure of these experiments, other birds, which have been introduced from South America and Mexico, may ultimately replace the domestic turkey made famous as an offering of Thanksgiving by the early Pilgrims. One of these is the South American ocellated

turkey, which has plumage like a peacock. Another is the chachalaca turkey from Mexico and Honduras.

The domesticated turkey is now heading toward extinction. Breeding stocks have decreased from 6,500,000 birds in 1900 to around 3,500,000 birds. New England raises scarcely enough to meet local demands.

Farms in the East have grown them usually as sidelines, individual flocks rarely exceeding 100 turkeys. In parts of Southern California turkeys are herded like sheep on the open range in flocks of 1,000 or more, tended by men on horseback.

AUSTRALIA

The Commonwealth of Australia is following very closely in its federation and otherwise the example of the United States. It has made another very decisive step in that Americanization by imitating the example of this country in establishing a political capital apart from any of the commercial metropolises.

The continent of Australia is a great deal bigger than the United States of America was before the Louisiana Purchase. It has 2,950,000 square miles of area, where we have about 3,000,000 outside of Alaska and the insular possessions.

Australia indulges in fond hopes that their country will have a growth like our own and become in the Antipodes the replica, at least, of the United States. The main trouble seems to be, like it is in Texas, deficiency in water.

After 26 years of agitation they have finally settled upon a place, which they call Canberra, about 100 miles from Sydney. Work is now going on there. A little fun is had from the fact that Canberra was the name of a distinctive bird in that country called the "laughing jackass," as it has a note similar to the bray of that animal. Its principal food is supposed to be fish and snakes. The people who named the capital were ignorant of this fact for several years after they had imposed the name. The building now in course of erection resembles much the plan upon which Washington has been built, and the main difference in the Government is going to forestall speculators and land grabbers by not selling any of the land. It will retain possession of the land, but lease it out to prospective buyers.

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CURRENT NEWS

WESTCHESTER BIRDS FED

Distribution of 900 pounds of cereal food through Westchester County to prevent pheasants and quail from starving was completed by the staff of Game Warden Edward Townsend.

Scratch food, including corn and meal for the quail and many ears of corn tied to bushes, where it can be seen by the pheasants, was distributed.

The food was provided by the Southern New York Fish and Game Association of Westchester County.

TY COBB, EXPERT BASE STEALER, GOOD AT NABBING STEALERS, TOO

Ty Cobb, baseball's greatest pilferer when it comes to bases, has discovered that he can catch 'em stealing, too. He called in the police to search the home of a former Negro servant when he missed a valuable pair of cuff links and in the man's house they found \$150 worth of table linen and other articles from Cobb's home at Augusta, Me., which had been missed off and on for five years.

The man and his wife, vigorously asserting their innocence, were lodged in jail charged with larceny.

UTE BRAVE MUST WEAR GARB OF SQUAW AS PUNISHMENT

Augustie, a six-foot Ute Indian buck, for 38 years has worn the garb of a squaw and has been entirely ignored by fellow males of his tribe—because in 1887 he was a "conscientious objector" and refused to take part in a tribal raid.

Augustie now is more than 80 years old, but he will remain a "squaw" for the rest of his life.

His sentence never will be revoked, and there is no chance for a parole, claim the present tribal leaders, who succeeded old Chief Colorow a score of years ago.

It was Colorow who pronounced sentence "back to the squaws" upon Augustie, who had declined to accompany Colorow on his last raid against the "palefaces" near Meeker.

NICOTINE TRAP

From the land of pipes comes another ingenious idea to keep your smoke clean and cool. A British inventor has made a new pipe with a trap for nicotine. The pipe stem is elongated, running past the bottom of the bowl. Fitting to this is a small metal tube perforated at the bottom and covered with a wooden tube.

A tubular chamber screws into the bottom of the wooden tube and into this chamber flows all the nicotine and saliva. Because it is kept so far away from the pipe bowl, the nicotine, it is claimed, cannot be drawn into the mouth, for it would have to traverse the length of this small metal tube and be drawn through the small perforations.

GOLD RUSH STIRS ONTARIO

Enthusiastic reports on the gold discoveries in the Red Lake district in Northwestern Ontario are reaching Toronto. The influx of prospectors

have been steady since the first claims were staked out last fall, and preparations at various points indicate that the spring opening of the water routes may see a gold rush of proportions comparable to that of 1898 in the Klondike.

It is reported that claims not yet surveyed or assayed have sold for as high as \$50,000. Major C. J. A. Cunningham Dunlop of Haileybury, Ontario, a veteran Northern prospector, has returned from Red Lake with a description of a large vein of visible gold, mostly free from milling ore.

The Red Bank country, about 1,200 miles northwest of Toronto and about 50 miles east of the Manitoba boundary, is 140 miles from the nearest railway, and is wild and unsurveyed. Access to the region is now hampered by winter conditions, and the journey is made only by dog team.

MAKE VIOLINS AND SHIPS FROM MATCH STICKS

What can be made out of match sticks? The answer is a wide variety of articles, useful, ornamental and diverting. The magazine Science and Invention has evolved a new scheme by which "shut-ins" and others may occupy their odd time in an interesting, novel and not wholly useless manner. The magazine is conducting what it terms a "matchcraft contest." The conditions are that more than 90 per cent. of the materials used in articles constructed must be match sticks. Many articles, some showing ingenuity in design, have resulted from the contest that is only a month old, the things submitted coming from all parts of the United States and the handicraft of persons of all ages of both sexes.

Some articles, which are on exhibition at the office of the magazine, 53 Park Place, are a violin, in which 10,000 match sticks were used and which is not unmusical; a radio loud speaker, equally practical; a ukelele, scale models of ships, bridges, wagons, trolley cars and trains; the model of a completely equipped radio station, with a miniature piano, microphone, electric standing lamp and other furnishings; a wide variety of clocks, pictures designed from match sticks, a checkerboard about four inches square, with the pieces made from the heads of matches; a compass, mathematically true, and any number of other things that in their workmanship show originality, patience and in many cases great skill.

One rule of the contest, to insure safety, is that safety matches must be used. The inventor of the game is H. Gernsback, publisher of Science and Invention, who says there is no commercial purpose back of the plan, which, he asserts, may be compared to the cross-word puzzle as a means of occupying leisure time.

The contest is to continue for a year for prizes totaling \$5,000. The winner of the first month's prize, \$100, was Carl Lurtz of Brooklyn for the violin; second prize, \$75, E. Russell Vass, 17 years old, of Chicago, loud speaker. Sixteen prizes are awarded monthly and the winners receive their models back after the awards are made.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

HEART OF DEAD CHICKEN BEATS IN LABORATORY FOR THIRTEEN YEARS

Kept alive by artificial methods, a bit of tissue from a chicken's heart has been growing in the laboratory of Dr. Alexis Carrel since 1913, says "Popular Mechanics." It has to be pared every day, for its natural tendency is to double its bulk every twenty-four hours, and had it been allowed to grow without restriction since the day the experiment began it would have covered an area as large as New York City, scientists say.

Motion pictures of the growth of tissue have been made. The film shows in a few minutes what occurs in twenty-four hours, an amazing display of the marvels of biology. So long as the tissue is properly cared for, it is believed it will not die.

VALUE OF WORLD'S DIAMONDS ESTIMATED AT \$5,000,000,000

According to a gem expert, the total value of all the diamonds in the world today is \$5,000,000,000, and a large share of them are in the United States, where about 50 per cent. of the annual supply and of other precious stones is consumed, says "Popular Mechanics."

The world's gold supply is placed at less than \$3,000,000,000, and most of this is also in the United States at the present time. The emerald, the oldest of the precious gems, and the ruby often rival the diamond in value, although the latter has become a standard and a favorite. Ruby mines in Burma have been worked for centuries, and their output during the last thirty-five years is placed at \$10,000,000.

JOHN HANCOCK, MASSACHUSETTS

Among the many striking characters of the fifty-six Signers of the Declaration of Independence, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of which will be celebrated by the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition opening in Philadelphia

June 1, 1926, is John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress and the first to affix his signature to the document.

He was a graduate of Harvard, a wealthy man and a courtly figure; gold and silver adorned his garments, and on public occasions his carriages, horses and servants in livery emulated the splendor of the nobility. His mansion displayed the magnificence of the courtier, rather than the simplicity of a Republican. Rivaling the British in the gorgeousness of his attire, John Hancock was in striking contrast to the colonists who affected a plain mode of dress. Because of these tendencies doubts of his patriotic integrity were circulated.

John Hancock was an eloquent orator, and in commemoration of the Boston Massacre he delivered such a stirring speech no doubt was left in the mind of anyone as to his perfect patriotism. Hancock from this time became as odious to the royal governor and his adherents as he was dear to the Republican party. By the speech he put his life in jeopardy.

The British were determined to capture him, and we all know what his fate would have been had their efforts proved successful. John Hancock was spared to render his country splendid service. In promoting the liberties of his country he unstintingly expended great wealth and was willing to make many sacrifices. At the time the American Army was besieging Boston, the destruction of Boston was considered. By the execution of these plans Hancock's whole fortune would have been sacrificed. Yet he immediately acceded to the measure and declared his readiness to surrender his all should his country require it.

His memory as one of the immortal signers of the Declaration, who pledged for their country's sake their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors, is a cherished ideal in the hearts of all Americans.

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